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Author's Note

Author's Note

If anyone wants to know, the cat on the cover is NOT Crazystar like it was in book 1. It's Splashheart... :)

This is the book after Crazystar's Battle. It is highly suggested that you read book 1 first, because this book will spoil a lot of plot details from book 1. :)

Anyhow, Crazystar's Battle was only from Crazystar's point of view. This book will alternate point of views between four cats: Crazystar of course, Whitepaw, Redpaw, and Flamekit. For more details on all of these cats and the story, you can check out the description.

So basically, though, the Dark Forest is rising, and Crazystar's greatest enemy, Splashheart, is leading them.... :D

Hope you enjoyed book 1 and you enjoy this story just as much!

Allegiances

Allegiances

THUNDERCLAN

Leader

Crazystar

Deputy

Liontail

Medicine Cat

Honeywhisker

Apprentice, Whitepaw

Warriors

Stonestream

Oakstream

Goldentooth

Rainfoot

Antwhisker

Applestorm

Hawkwhisker

Flamefoot

Cloudheart

Nightflower

Mousestorm

Blackwing

Mudsplash

Swiftstorm

Brightleaf

Apprentice, Redpaw

Morningblaze

Blossomtail

Eagleclaw

Shrewfur

Graywhisker

Apprentices

Redpaw

Whitepaw

Queens

Crazystar(nursing Stonestream’s kits: Blazekit and Flamekit)

Morningblaze(expecting Blackwing's kits)

Elders

Leafstorm

Prologue

Prologue

Trees with dark gray bark stretched farther into the sky than any cat could climb. Black grass covered the ground. A sickly gray mist swirled through the forest, the only thing that provided any light at all.

Three cats gathered in this shadowy forest, sitting by a dark, slimy river. A fallen tree with rotting bark had fallen across the river, much like the tree-bridge that crossed the lake for Clan cats to reach the Gathering Island.

One of the cats was taller than the others and it was clear he was leader. He was very muscular, with gray-and-white fur and emotionless amber eyes.

The other two cats were a dark gray tom with narrowed amber eyes, and a brown tom with icy blue eyes.

“We didn’t win last time, Splashheart,” Smokewhisker grumbled. “Seedfur and Breezepelt made that pretty clear.”

“But the Clans don’t have the Three this time,” the gray-and-white tom responded, eyes gleaming. “All they have is that pathetic excuse for a leader, Crazystar.”

“Yes,” Smokewhisker agreed, carefully selecting his words. “But I just think we should choose a more…cautious approach this time. Think through our battle strategies completely instead of doing the whatever works plan.”

Splashheart nodded and turned to Thornwhisker. “I agree with Smokewhisker,” the brown tom growled. “And most importantly, less Clan cats! Only ones with real potential to become true warriors. And if we have any doubts about their loyalty, we kill them!”

“Well, we know ThunderClan best,” Splashheart meowed. “We choose a cat they won’t expect…perhaps that medicine cat apprentice, Whitepaw. And Oakstream is angry at Crazystar for choosing Stonestream. And what about Hawkwhisker? We almost got him to join our side last time.”

The cats sat there by the riverbank, discussing the cats they would train in their ways…

***

Redkit pulled away as her mother, Pinefoot, tried to groom her fur. “I’m too old for that!” she protested. “Warriors don’t have their mothers doing this to them and humiliating them!”

Whitekit seemed awkward sitting next to her. “I’m sorry, Redkit,” he muttered for the thousandth time. “I just wanted to be a medicine cat. Teach me some warrior stuff, okay? Perhaps a few battle moves?”

Redkit cuffed him lightly on the head. “Of course, mouse-brain!” she replied with false cheerfulness. “And you can teach me about your boring herbs too if you want!”

“I don’t care if we’re training differently,” Whitekit meowed seriously. “We’ll always get along!”

Crazystar emerged from the nursery behind them. Liontail rushed over. “Crazystar, I can do the ceremony…” the deputy began.

The gray-furred she-cat rolled her eyes. “My kits aren’t going to die if I leave them with Morningblaze for a few heartbeats!”

Redkit admired how strong the ThunderClan leader looked as she took a massive leap onto the Highledge. “Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath the Highledge for a Clan meeting!” she yowled.

Honeywhisker, the medicine cat with golden fur and amber eyes, joined her. “Whitekit, is it your wish to enter the

mysteries of StarClan and to serve and heal your Clanmates?" the ThunderClan medicine cat asked.

Her brother lifted his head. "It is," he declared.

"Then, until your mentor determines you are ready to receive your full name, you will be known as Whitepaw," Crazystar meowed. "May StarClan grant you the ability to serve your Clan well for many seasons."

"Redkit, step forward," the gray-furred she-cat ordered. "From this moment on, until you receive your warrior name, you'll be known as Redpaw. Brightleaf, you were my own apprentice. I hope you share your enthusiasm and talent with Redpaw."

Brightleaf looked almost as nervous as Redpaw was as she leaned down to touch noses with her new apprentice. After a brief moment, she pulled away.

The sun had vanished by the time the ceremony concluded. Redpaw listened as the Clan began to chant her new name to the evening sky.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1

"Whitepaw, could you go collect some more marigold?" Honeywhisker asked.

"We already have plenty," he grumbled.

Honeywhisker sighed. "That's an order," she responded.

Whitepaw rolled his eyes and marched out of the den. He didn't want anybody to get hurt, but he wanted something fun to do. Collecting herbs? Boring. Sorting herbs? Even more boring! Taking care of the elders? The worst part of all!

He wanted to treat cats and help his Clanmates, not run around doing all of the annoying jobs Honeywhisker didn't feel like doing!

I don't care what she says. I want to go see what Redpaw is doing! She said Brightleaf was taking her to practice battle training.

It was sunhigh as he padded out of the camp. Whitepaw knew the forest pretty well. He followed the path to the training hollow and hid behind a tree with a thick trunk. Inside the training hollow, Brightleaf was demonstrating a move for Redpaw.

"This is one of Crazystar's special battle moves. When a cat charges, you can charge back," the silver-and-white she-cat explained. "Then, take a mighty leap and spin around in mid-air. Often, your opponent won't turn around fast enough so you have time to land a blow or two. Now I'll charge you and you can try!"

Simple enough. Brightleaf dashed towards her apprentice. Redpaw looked confused and hesitated for almost too long. When she jumped finally, she barely cleared Brightleaf's head. She tried to turn around but she hit the ground first. It was an awkward

landing, and she tumbled onto the ground. “Nice try,” Brightleaf meowed encouragingly, but Whitepaw didn’t think she actually believed that.

That was pathetic!

Redpaw climbed back to her paws, panting heavily. “Maybe we should go hunting?” Brightleaf suggested.

Boring! You’re just sneaking up behind animals!

But his sister’s face brightened. “Sure!” she replied excitedly.

They started walking right in Whitepaw’s direction. Forgetting the task of collecting marigold, Whitepaw scampered away, definitely not wanting to get caught and reported to Honeywhisker or Crazystar.

He slowed down as soon as he knew he was too far away to be seen and walked leisurely back to camp. By the time he reached camp, it was sundown. He was in no hurry to return to the medicine cat den though. Liontail, the ThunderClan deputy, walked over. “Whitepaw, Honeywhisker is waiting for you!” he meowed. “You better hurry over there, she looked kind of angry.”

Whitepaw sighed and padded into the den. “Where have you been and where’s the marigold?” his mentor demanded.

“Get it yourself,” he growled, walking right past the medicine cat and settling down in his nest.

“Great StarClan, couldn’t you just be obedient for once!” she exclaimed with frustration. “Is the only part you like visiting the Moonpool?”

Whitepaw ignored her and drifted off into sleep.

***

There was no sun or moon in the forest.

The dark bark of the trees was faintly illuminated by a gray mist that gave off a slight glow. The grass was even darker than the trees.

A brown tom with amber eyes stepped out from behind a tree, and the medicine cat apprentice backed away nervously. “W-who are you?” Whitepaw stammered.

“Thornwhisker,” the tom meowed, dipping his head. “And you’re Whitepaw, right? I understand you have an interest in fighting, is that true?”

It was, but he wasn’t sure whether to tell this mysterious cat the truth. “Um, yes,” he answered finally.

“Well, would you like me to teach you some moves?” Thornwhisker asked.

“Of course!” he blurted out, not able to stop the words from escaping out of his mouth.

Thornwhisker turned around. “Then follow me,” he growled. “These days, we have a clearing for training…”

“We?” Whitepaw asked.

The tom nodded. “My friends and I are all interested in you,” he meowed. “You have real…potential.”

He thinks I can be good at fighting! I’ll prove him right!

“Thanks!” he exclaimed.

This seemed to amuse Thornwhisker. “Oh, you’re more than welcome.”

A/N: I’m sure you know what Thornwhisker meant by potential :D

And I hope you’ve enjoyed this book so far! Please comment!

Chapter 2

Chapter 2

Countless cats raced through the camp entrance. Their eyes were different colors, but they all shared one trait, and that was the fury inside of them.

Flamekit wasn't small anymore. He was big and strong, like a warrior. Actually, in his dream, he was certain somehow that he was a warrior. He tensed his muscles and prepared for battle. "ThunderClan, attack!" Crazystar's voice shouted.

He launched himself at a massive brown she-cat, but was quickly dragged off of her by a cat who looked like a taller, more muscular version of Whitepaw. *That doesn't make sense! Whitepaw is a member of my own Clan plus he's not a warrior, he's a medicine cat!*

Whitepaw's green eyes were filled with hatred, more hatred then Flamekit thought could possibly exist. He struggled to get away from this cat who couldn't possibly be ThunderClan's medicine cat apprentice but he couldn't. He couldn't do anything but watch as Whitepaw lifted a forepaw and brought it down towards his neck.

Flamekit closed his eyes and waited for the end to come…

It never did. The orange tom hesitantly opened his eyes and found himself back in the nursery, his mother's warm body wrapped around him and his brother, Blazekit.

"My little warrior is awake!" Crazystar purred. "How about a game of moss-ball once Blazekit is awake?"

"Okay!" he shouted before poking his brother hard on the shoulder.

“I didn’t say to wake him up!” Crazystar sighed, but she didn’t seem angry.

Blazekit yawned and opened his blue eyes. “What…why did you do that, Flamekit?” he asked tiredly.

“Moss-ball!” Flamekit replied with excitement.

Blazekit was instantly awake. Flamekit’s brother scrambled to his feet. “C’mon, Crazystar, let’s go!” Blazekit exclaimed.

Crazystar stood up slowly and stretched. Flamekit waited impatiently. “Okay, I’ll be right back,” she told her kits. “I’m just going to get some moss from Honeywhisker.”

She returned soon with a wad of moss in her mouth. The ThunderClan knocked it towards Blazekit. Flamekit’s brother ran forward and hit it over to Flamekit. The ball of moss went soaring towards him and he could tell it would be way over his head. He leapt as high as he could and batted it back at Blazekit. Blazekit raised his paw and then…

And then Brightleaf and her apprentice, Redpaw dashed into camp, fear in their eyes. “Crazystar, badger by the abandoned Twoleg nest!” the silver-and-white she-cat panted.

Crazystar abandoned the game. “Liontail, Hawkwhisker, Cloudheart, and Goldentooth, come with me!” she ordered. “Brightleaf, you can come to, someone has to show us where it is. The rest of you stay and guard camp. I don’t want any of the kits getting injured.”

Flamekit sat down dejectedly and watched as his mother led the patrol out of camp.

“I wish she wasn’t leader,” Blazekit muttered. “Then she’d have more time for us.”

Flamekit couldn’t agree more. “I suppose we should find Stonestream?” he suggested.

Stonestream was talking with Flamefoot by the elders den. Blazekit rushed over to him and Flamekit followed. “Can you play moss-ball with us?” Blazekit asked, a pleading look in his eyes. “Please?”

Stonestream laughed. “Flamefoot, would you like to join us?” their father asked.

“Why not?” the orange tom laughed.

The four of them played moss-ball for a while, and Flamekit almost managed to forget his mother wasn’t there.

A/N: Hope you liked it from Flamekit's point of view! I think he's going to be one of my favorite characters in this story :)

Chapter 3

Chapter 3

Crazystar followed her former apprentice through the forest. She'd been fortunate enough not to encounter a badger so far in her life, but she knew Cloudstar had lost one of his lives to a badger.

Brightleaf seemed extremely nervous as she led the way. But then, Liontail halted suddenly. "I guess it's not in its den anymore," he meowed, pointing with his tail to the large creature walking noisily through the forest.

"ThunderClan, attack!" she yowled, summoning her courage for the sake of her Clan.

She rushed forward and swiped her claws across the badger's snout. The badger swatted her away with a massive forepaw just as her Clanmates reached it.

Agony washed over her for a brief moment and then everything faded away into cold darkness. The pain was gone. She opened her eyes. The warriors of StarClan were gathered around her. "What happened?" Crazystar asked. "Did I lose a life or am I dead?"

Cloudstar appeared in front of her. "Crazystar, you've lost your first life," he replied. "But you still have eight more."

"Will it make me weaker?" she questioned him.

"No," the white-furred tom responded. "You'll be just as strong on the rest of your lives as you were on this one."

"Can I return to my Clanmates?" she asked.

He nodded. "Just someone I think you might want to say hi to before we send you back," Cloudstar meowed, stepping aside

to reveal a dark gray tom.

"Streamsplash!" Crazystar shouted happily.

Her brother nodded, looking slightly sad. "I miss you, Crazystar," he sighed. "Guide your Clanmates well and be prepared for the most difficult battle you could possibly imagine. And the most important warning; beware of your own Clanmates."

"What?" she demanded. "Why…"

StarClan faded. A voice was urgently calling her name. "Crazystar! Crazystar!" Liontail yowled. "Are you…"

"I'm back," the ThunderClan leader groaned, weakly opening her eyes. "Where's the badger?"

"We drove it out," her deputy explained. "I sent Cloudheart and Hawkwhisker to make sure it leaves the territory."

Crazystar could feel her strength gradually returning. She rose slowly to her paws. "Let's return to camp, I suppose," she meowed, turning back in the direction of the stone hollow.

Liontail nodded. "And, not to be rude or disrespectful or anything, but you might try paying more attention to your kits," he told her in a quieter voice. "You should've seen the looks on their faces when you totally abandoned them to go chase the badger."

Crazystar whipped around. "For StarClan's sake, Liontail, I spend plenty of time with them!" she exclaimed. "Just because I don't spend all day in the nursery doesn't mean…"

Her deputy snorted. "You're always running off on some patrol or investigating some danger that gets reported," he growled. "You're hardly ever around for them…"

"No, I don't!" Crazystar protested. "I…"

"Care more about everyone and everything else than your own kits," Liontail snarled.

“That’s not true! I have responsibilities as Clan leader,” she insisted. “Besides I played moss-ball with them today!”

“That’s the first time you’ve played with them since they opened their eyes!” Liontail countered. “Stonestream is always the one who does stuff with them! It’s a wonder they even bother to invite you to play with them anymore!”

“What I do or don’t do is my own business,” she meowed, struggling to control her temper. “Now we’re going back to camp and you’re not going to say another word about this.”

Liontail sighed heavily but obeyed. As they walked back to camp, Crazystar was wondering if any of his statements were true. *I give them plenty of attention. Right?*

Chapter 4

Chapter 4

They were still playing moss-ball with Flamefoot and Stonestream when Flamekit's mother finally returned to camp, looking very angry. The young kit was still upset about her latest disappearance, so he completely ignored her and knocked the ball of moss back to his father. *I have a great father, but a TERRIBLE mother! She never does anything with us!*

When it seemed like Blazekit was about to rush over to where Crazystar was standing, Flamekit meowed, "Don't say hi to her. She doesn't deserve it!"

Stonestream paused the game and looked uneasy. "Well, you're mother is very busy, being leader and all…" he began.

"That's just an excuse and you know it too," Blazekit spoke before Flamekit could. "She could play with us if wanted to! We may be only two moons old, but we're not as dumb as you think! She doesn't care about us!"

"Now, you're judging Crazystar too much and I'm sure she..." Stonestream protested, looking desperately to Flamefoot for assistance, but Crazystar's father shook his head and walked away.

"Explain why she never does anything with us," Flamekit responded before his brother could speak again. "Explain why she's always rushing out of camp. Everyone knows she just wants to get away from us and it's time you admit it."

Before his father could say anything else in Crazystar's defense, the gray-furred she-cat was marching towards them. "Hi, my precious kits!" she purred. "Did you have fun?"

"Yes," Flamekit growled. "Would've been better if the world's most absent mother was here!"

The ThunderClan leader looked absolutely stunned for a moment. “Now, sweetie, I had to take care of the badger…” she started.

“No!” Flamekit shouted angrily. “I don’t want to hear any excuses! Liontail or someone could’ve led the patrol if you actually cared!”

“But it was better for me to lead…” Crazystar tried to defend herself again.

He wasn’t listening. Flamekit turned around and padded towards the nursery. “Blazekit, you don’t agree with him, do you?” his mother asked, and he could hear the hurt in her voice.

“Actually, I do,” Blazekit snarled, sounding just as furious with the gray-furred she-cat as Flamekit was. “Maybe if you were ever around or did stuff with us, we’d have a different point of view. How would you like it if we started caring as much as you do?”

Flamekit heard his brother’s pawsteps and turned around. Blazekit was running towards him and away from the cat they once thought had loved them.

***

It was a new day. The two kits had refused to sleep anywhere near Crazystar. Their mother had left the nursery to go to the leader’s den a little past moonhigh last night, miserable green eyes staring at the ground and her tail drooping.

They trotted out into the camp and were surprised to find rain falling from the sky. Thunder boomed noisily and bright lightning flashed nearby.

The whole camp was in chaos. Cats were running around in a panic, and Liontail was yelling for order, to no use. *What in StarClan’s name is going on here? Hasn’t everybody seen a thunderstorm before today?*

Flamekit and Blazekit saw Stonestream emerging from

Crazystar's den for some reason. "Why is everyone acting all crazy?" Flamekit asked. "The storm isn't that scary!"

Stonestream looked up, pain in his blue eyes. "It isn't the storm," his father responded. "Crazystar is missing."

A/N: Sorry about leaving you all on a cliffhanger!!! :)

What do you think about Crazystar's disappearance? You've absolutely, positively got to tell me your thoughts!

Chapter 5

Chapter 5

Where did Honeywhisker say the deathberries were?

Crazystar continued searching for the poisonous plant along the ShadowClan border, not caring about the heavy downpour that was drenching her fur. She remembered the previous day too well. First, Liontail accusing her of putting the Clan first and ignoring her kits! What was she supposed to do, she was leader and she had to take care of the Clan!

Then, her kits got mad at her and might as well have said they hated her. Crazystar could almost hear the unspoken words. Did anyone understand at all?

After the kits basically kicked her out of the nursery, she saw Stonestream was still awake, eating a mouse close to the Highledge. The ThunderClan leader had padded over to him, assuming he'd comfort her. She replayed the conversation in her mind.

"Stonestream, they hate me," she whispered sadly.

The former WindClan tom shook his head. "They don't," he meowed. "But you can hardly blame them for being upset."

"What is that supposed to mean?" she asked.

"Crazystar, I'm just being honest," he sighed. "I feel bad for them because they never see their mother. You may have responsibilities, but you really should do something with them. Your whole day doesn't have to be occupied with patrols and…"

"So you don't love me either!" the gray-furred she-cat shouted, dashing towards the camp entrance and into the forest.

She faintly heard his voice from where she stood outside of

camp. "She'll come back," Stonestream told himself.

Crazystar looked back one last time. "No, I won't," she meowed quietly.

Back in the current time, she finally saw what she was looking for. A bush filled with sparkling scarlet berries was directly to her left. The ThunderClan leader sighed. *Liontail will be a better leader than I could ever be anyways…*

She reached out with a forepaw to pull the deathberries off of it…and then something, no, someone crashed into her and knocked her onto the ground. Liontail was glaring at her. "No!" he shouted. "Every time someone gets mad at you, do you just go out and kill yourself?"

Crazystar heaved herself upward, getting her deputy away from her. "What about your whole Clan hating you?" she demanded.

The golden tom stood. "We don't hate you!" he meowed with exasperation. "We're just advising you to spend some time with your kits! They need their mother. Now I am taking you back to camp and you will play moss-ball with Flamekit and Blazekit!"

"No! I…" she began to protest, only to be interrupted.

"Did you even consider what you did to the Clan, vanishing like that?" Liontail snarled. "They're all going crazy and running off to look for you instead of hunting and patrolling borders like we should be doing! I tried to organize two patrols to check the ShadowClan and WindClan borders, but they refused to obey until we found you! Now let's go!"

Crazystar reluctantly followed without arguing any further. They reached the stone hollow just before sunhigh and found an almost empty camp. Liontail sighed. "Hawkwhisker, Blackwing, and Nightflower would you mind finding everybody and telling them that Crazystar isn't missing anymore?" the deputy asked, but it was clearly an order.

The three cats nodded and dashed off. Liontail pointed towards the nursery, where two kits were intentionally ignoring her. Crazystar stumbled towards them. “Um, hi,” she meowed.

Flamekit looked up and stared back at her without saying anything. “Well, then, how about a game of moss-ball?” she asked.

Blazekit looked hopeful, but Flamekit narrowed his eyes. “Why should we want to do anything with you?” the young kit demanded angrily.

He must of noticed the pain in her eyes though, because he added, “Well, fine. You’ll just dash off somewhere else as soon as we start playing anyways, but sure. Won’t hurt us to play moss-ball for five heartbeats.”

Crazystar turned around and padded into Honeywhisker’s den to get some moss. *Wasn’t exactly an “apology accepted” statement, but I suppose it’s better than nothing.*

A/N: Sorry for the wait, but I hope you enjoyed! Thank you so much for reading, I promise I'll update soon!

Chapter 6

Chapter 6

Redpaw followed Goldentooth, who was leading a small group of cats to search for Crazystar. The patrol included Cloudheart, Mousestorm, Mudsplash, and best of all, her brother, Whitepaw. The medicine cat apprentice seemed to be quieter than usual, and was also limping slightly. *Hmm…that's strange…maybe he got a thorn in his paw or something.*

Goldentooth suddenly halted. They were extremely close to the ShadowClan border and were standing by a bush with bright red berries. Cloudheart, a white-furred she-cat, sniffed the ground by the bush. "Oh, no," she muttered. "Her scent is strongest by the deathberries."

Redpaw gasped with horror. But another voice quickly asked, "Who's missing?"

A black-furred tom stepped out from behind a tree. "I wouldn't tell you, Shadestar," Goldentooth growled.

"Well...guess what?" the ShadowClan leader meowed. "We want the land on your territory up to the Twoleg path. Give to us now or we'll take it by force. Will you surrender?"

"Of course not! Your pathetic warriors would never beat ThunderClan anyways!" Redpaw was shocked that it was Whitepaw who answered, stepping forward.

"ShadowClan, attack!" Shadestar growled before leaping at her brother.

Shadestar was intercepted by Goldentooth. Cats ran out of the bushes, but fortunately the ShadowClan patrol only had one more cat than ThunderClan did.

A brown-and-white she-cat charged at Redpaw. The ThunderClan apprentice barely remembered to sidestep. Fortunately for her, when she stepped aside, the ShadowClan warrior couldn't stop in time to avoid crashing into a tree. *Oh, great StarClan, I'm terrible at fighting and this cat is older than me! How am I supposed to win? Actually, forget about winning, let's talk about surviving…*

The she-cat charged again. Redpaw slid to the right again, but this time the ShadowClan cat was prepared. She swept the ThunderClan apprentice's feet out from under her, and Redpaw tumbled to the ground. "I knew apprentices were bad at fighting, but not this bad!" the she-cat laughed.

Redpaw screamed in agony as the ShadowClan warrior raked her claws across her belly. She seemed to enjoy the apprentice's pain and repeated the move. The she-cat lifted her forepaw for the third time, but suddenly staggered sideways as a white tom sprang onto her back. The ShadowClan warrior rolled onto the ground, but Whitepaw clearly anticipated the move and jumped off. She was back on her feet before he could attack.

The she-cat charged and Whitepaw took a flying leap over her head, spinning around perfectly in mid-air. It was a move Redpaw had struggled with since Brightleaf had shown it to her a little over a half-moon ago.

Whitepaw slapped her hindlegs with a forepaw and she collapsed to the ground. He raked his claws down the ShadowClan warrior's stomach a few time and meowed, "Feels great, doesn't it? Now get out of here!"

He released her and Redpaw was surprised when she actually fled from the battle. "Why did she fall down suddenly like that?" the ThunderClan apprentice asked curiously.

"There's a tendon on your hindlegs, and if you hit it, your opponent will collapse," her brother quickly explained.

"Thanks for saving me," Redpaw meowed.

"No problem," he responded almost instantaneously.

The ShadowClan cats soon had no choice but to retreat. Almost immediately after Shadestar and his warriors disappeared on the ShadowClan side of the border, Hawkwhisker dashed over to where they stood, gasping for breath. “Liontail found Crazystar,” the brown tom panted. “You can all stop looking for her.”

The patrol breathed a sigh of relief in unison. “That’s great because we need to report what just happened to her,” Goldentooth stated, and Redpaw caught a slight hint of tiredness in the senior warrior’s voice.

“Why?” Hawkwhisker asked.

As Goldentooth explained the battle with ShadowClan to the brown tom, the patrol began to walk back in the direction of the stone hollow. And Redpaw couldn’t help but wonder how Whitepaw, who was a medicine cat apprentice with no warrior training, had more knowledge of battle moves than his sister and executed them so perfectly. Meanwhile, she struggled with just about everything other than hunting and hardly had any fighting skills. *Am I just that bad at battle training or is something peculiar going on here?*

Chapter 7

Chapter 7

Instead of taking Whitepaw to the clearing where they trained, Thornwhisker led him through the forest until they reached another clearing near a river. In the center of the clearing was a large rock which a gray-and-white tom stood on top of. “Who is that?” the medicine cat apprentice whispered.

“A friend of mine I want to introduce you to,” the brown tom replied. “I’ve told him how good you are during training and how eager you are to learn.”

“Splashheart!” Thornwhisker called, and the tom turned around.

Whitepaw gasped with shock. “Splashheart?” he stammered nervously. “Aren’t-aren’t you…”

“Evil?” the gray-and-white tom purred. “No, but I assume that’s the way Crazystar and the elders would put it.”

“But you killed Cloudstar,” Whitepaw countered.

Splashheart sighed. “Perhaps I was wrong there,” he meowed. “But I was angry. The part of the story they never tell is that Cloudstar’s father killed my mate, Pebblefoot. Once I was leader I would’ve improved the Clans. The elders? They don’t do anything! They waste valuable time that apprentices could use for training instead and they take our fresh-kill. And all they do is lie around in their den and tell dumb stories to kits!”

True enough. I hate changing the elders bedding and removing their ticks! “And when we do stuff for them, they just complain,” Whitepaw added.

Splashheart nodded. “We are going to unite the Clans,”

he continued. “Thornwhisker and the rest of my allies will get each Clan from its leader…”

“Won’t that mean killing cats?” Whitepaw asked.

“Hopefully not,” Splashheart responded. “We will try to get them to surrender peacefully. And if not, we will be forced to take over by force for the good of the Clans. They cannot beat us, and we’ll face less opposition than you think. Some cats listen to reason. Then we’ll erase the boundaries and change the rules of the warrior code. We’ll all be one Clan, so there will be no more problems with half-Clan kits. There will be no need to visit the Moonpool for prophecies if we’re not all fighting each other all of the time, so the medicine cats can focus on healing cats. Erasing the boundaries and rewriting the code. Does that sound evil?”

The apprentice shook his head. “No,” he replied. “Life would be better that way actually.”

The gray-and-white tom looked back towards Whitepaw’s Dark Forest mentor. “Thornwhisker, I can train Whitepaw for today,” Splashheart meowed.

***

A half-moon had passed since Whitepaw had first met Splashheart. Some nights he trained with the gray-and-white tom and the rest of the time, he was with Thornwhisker.

He’d caught glimpses of some familiar cats from around the lake. There was Rainpool and Ashstorm, two brothers who belonged to WindClan. There was a red-furred she-cat named Salmonstorm, who belonged to RiverClan. He saw Hawkwhisker attempting a complicated battle move with a dark gray tom, and Oakstream was training ferociously with a white-furred tom who seemed to fit the elders description of the former ThunderClan leader named Cloudstar.

The only thing he disliked about his nighttime training was that they fought with claws unsheathed. Thornwhisker insisted though that pain was what made the mind think and strategize. And

they never hurt him badly. Only small wounds that barely even stung!

One night, when Splashheart was training him, Whitepaw meowed, “I’m thinking of resigning as a medicine cat and becoming a warrior. I mean, being a medicine cat is pointless!”

Splashheart stopped training. “I agree that medicine cat duties are pointless, but I think it is good that you’re a medicine cat. They would never suspect that you of all cats chose the right side,” the gray-and-white tom told him.

“Fine,” Whitepaw growled. “I hate being a medicine cat, but I’ll do it for you. When are we going to attack?”

Splashheart seemed amused. “You’re quite different these days. I remember when you didn’t want to…” he began.

“Yes,” the medicine cat interrupted. “I’m more eager to improve the Clans and change the code. If I have to fight to do that, then I will.”

“I like your attitude. We lost the previous time, so we’re just trying to plan and strategize the whole thing better,” Splashheart explained. “As soon as there is no chance that the Clans will win, we will take over and unite them all under the name of SplashClan. Us true warriors will rule the forest! But, a little extra training for you apprentices never does hurt.”

“I still don’t want to harm my Clanmates, but I believe in uniting the Clans. I will fight for the Dark Forest,” Whitepaw meowed. “And I have an idea. Every cat should hunt for themselves. No more fresh-kill pile. The queens can have their mates hunt for them, and that way every cat would earn their fresh-kill and poor hunters would be encouraged to try harder.”

Splashheart nodded. “Yes, we can have that also,” he meowed. “The Clans will be so much better after this and I just wish more cats could see it like you do. Now it’s dawn, I guess you should return back to your nest. We’ll train more tomorrow night though, try to stay home from the Gathering if you can!”

“Of course!” Whitepaw shouted. “The Gathering is boring anyways, the leaders just talk about dumb stuff. Training here is much more interesting.”

The apprentice closed his eyes and found himself back in the boring medicine cat den with Honeywhisker still asleep beside him. *Great...another day of sorting herbs, collecting herbs, and changing the useless elders bedding.*

A/N: What do think will happen to Whitepaw? Do you think he actually will side with Splashheart and the Dark Forest? :) Hope you enjoyed, sorry for not updating yesterday and thanks again for being awesome fans and reading this book!

Chapter 8

Chapter 8

Whitepaw had been acting funny.

He seemed to be avoiding her on purpose and when she was actually able to talk to him, he always came up with an excuse like, “Sorry, I have to collect more juniper berries or else Honeywhisker will get mad!”

Redpaw knew Whitepaw didn’t even like collecting herbs! There had to be a reason for his behavior towards her. *What did I do to make him mad at me? I need to just figure it out and apologize so he’ll act normal again! There’s no one else I can talk to about my problems with fighting, or the giant squirrel I caught yesterday, or how Brightleaf talked Liontail out of putting me on the tunnel-training patrol this morning…*

Redpaw crept slowly and silently towards the medicine cat den on this cloudy day. She listened carefully to every word both of the cats inside said.

“Is the poultice for Leafstorm finished yet?” Honeywhisker meowed.

“Yes,” her brother responded quietly.

There was an awkward pause in the conversation. “So how’s Redpaw?” Honeywhisker asked finally, and the ThunderClan apprentice held her breath, waiting for her brother’s response.

“Fine,” Whitepaw grumbled. “Do you think a giant tree fell on her head from the sky or something?”

Redpaw heard the golden she-cat sigh. “Why are you always so grumpy?” Honeywhisker asked.

“I’m not grumpy!” the medicine cat apprentice shouted

angrily. “I’m just sick of never doing anything fun and…”

“Then why did you become a medicine cat?” his mentor demanded.

“Because I felt like it!” Whitepaw growled.

Suddenly, some cat whispered, “What are you doing?”

Redpaw spun around to see Liontail eyeing her suspiciously. “Nothing much!” she lied. “Just walking by!”

The ThunderClan deputy clearly didn’t believe her. “You were eavesdropping on their conversation, weren’t you?” the golden tom asked. “Why in StarClan’s name would you want to secretly listen to the medicine cats talk? Does this happen to have anything to do with your medicine cat apprentice brother?”

Just tell him the truth, maybe he knows something about Whitepaw.

“Whitepaw is acting strange,” she replied shakily. “He keeps avoiding me, and I wanted to know what’s going on.”

Liontail sighed. “Honeywhisker is my sister,” he began. “We used to talk to each other about everything back when we were in the nursery. But a few moons into her apprenticeship, she grew more distant. She used to be really talkative, but she stopped talking to me almost completely. There’s nothing wrong with you, Redpaw, and it’s not your fault. There’s simply nothing you can do, your brother has already made his decision to be a medicine cat.”

“But he promised that we’d always get along the same way!” Redpaw protested. “Something has got to be wrong, and I have to find out what it is.”

Liontail shook his head sadly. “I thought Honeywhisker and I would be the same perfect way forever that we were as kits,” he responded. “But medicine cats can never be the same once they visit the Moonpool. Just trust me, everything is completely normal. Your brother is just a typical medicine cat apprentice.”

The deputy padded away, evidently believing the problem was solving. But Redpaw still thought something was going on. *Perhaps I should just ask Whitepaw what's wrong…*

She walked into the den. "Hey, Whitepaw," she meowed.

Her brother looked up. "Um, hi," he managed to speak finally.

"Are you mad at me or something?" she asked. "You've been acting…"

Whitepaw looked annoyed. "No, Redpaw, I'm just busy," he sighed. "You should be occupied with hunting or training too. Now Honeywhisker says I have to take care of the worthless elders…"

"Whitepaw, the elders are not worthless!" the medicine cat reprimanded him. "They've served their Clan for a long…"

"And now all they do is sit in their den and complain about us as we do what they should be doing for themselves," her brother interrupted Honeywhisker.

Honeywhisker looked over to Redpaw. "I'm sorry, Redpaw, but could you please step outside?" the medicine cat meowed. "My apprentice and I need to have a talk."

As she exited the den, Redpaw couldn't stop thinking about Whitepaw. *He didn't use to be like this! I don't know what, but something is most certainly wrong…*

A/N: I know Whitepaw wasn't being very nice but I couldn't help but laugh when I was reading the part that I wrote where he says sarcastically, "Do you think a giant tree fell on her head from the sky or something?" For some reason, I just had to mention that in the author's note. Anyhow, I probably won't update anymore today but I will definitely update tomorrow. Please comment, hope you are enjoying this!

Chapter 9

Chapter 9

Flamekit was pinned down by a massive warrior who was repeatedly raking her claws across his stomach. All he could think about was the terrible pain and the certainty he would die.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw his mother, Crazystar, fall to the ground with a cry of pain. A gray-and-white tom stood over her, looking triumphant, and a glow was found in sinister amber eyes. A nasty wound was in the ThunderClan leader's throat and she was unmoving, staring blankly in Flamekit's direction. *No! She can't be dead! I…*

The nightmare faded and Flamekit weakly opened his eyes to Crazystar leaving the den at sunset. *Why do I keep having the same dumb dream almost every day? And it feels like it's real but of course it's not…* "I'm sorry…but I really do have to go to the Gathering or else the other Clans will assume that ThunderClan is weakened by something or someone," she whispered softly as she crept away.

Once, Flamekit would've been angry. But these days, since the badger incident, she was at least around for half of the time, which was more than he and his brother could've ever hoped for. Just this morning, Crazystar and Stonestream had pretended to be ShadowClan warriors attacking camp. Blazekit had pounced on their father while Flamekit tackled the ThunderClan leader. Crazystar had collapsed dramatically, groaning with fake terror, as he sank his sharp claws into his spine. "It's fine," he responded, thinking of that. "We'll be okay!"

For some reason, Crazystar seemed worried. But she'd left them before, hadn't she? "Well, just don't leave camp," their mother told them.

Blazekit was awake now. "Yes, Crazystar!" they shouted

in unison.

The gray-furred she-cat padded reluctantly out of the den. As soon as she was out of earshot, Blazekit spoke. “I’m tired of listening to all the rules all of the time!” Flamekit’s brother complained. “Even Crazystar misbehaved as a kit, Leafstorm told us about it! I don’t want to be confined to this boring camp any longer. Once they leave, let’s explore the forest!”

“But she’ll punish us!” Flamekit meowed in shock.

Blazekit rolled his eyes. “She’ll never know. She’s going to the Gathering, remember?” he snorted confidently.

Flamekit’s brother peered out of the nursery. “They’re just marching out of the camp entrance right now,” the black-and-orange kit announced.

Flamekit stared as his brother lifted his head and padded out into the camp, where night was falling. “Sorry, but I just don’t want to get caught and get in trouble,” he meowed, assuming Blazekit wouldn’t go without him.

“Fine,” his brother responded. “You don’t have to come.”

Blazekit walked across the camp and Flamekit waited for him to turn around and laugh, saying it was all a joke. Making fun of Flamekit for actually falling for it. But he didn’t. The flame-colored tom sighed and sprinted to catch up with his brother. “I’m not going to let you go out alone,” he whispered when Blazekit gave him a questioning look. “Where do you want to go?”

“The Sky Oak,” he replied quietly.

“How do you find it?” Flamekit asked.

Blazekit shook his head in disbelief. “Simple,” he answered when he realized Flamekit wasn’t kidding. “Leafstorm was talking about the territory and he said the Sky Oak is a little ways down the path leading directly out of camp. It’s the tallest, oldest, fattest tree you could imagine, and that’s how you know which one it is.”

Flamekit's concerns did prove to be pointless because it was obvious when they reached the legendary tree. It towered high above all of the others, and it was wider than three of the other tree trunks put together. "I bet you can't reach that branch up there!" Blazekit challenged him, pointing with his tail to the lowest branch.

Before Flamekit could try to talk Blazekit out of it, the kit had taken a giant leap and sank his claws into the light brown bark. He reached up with one forepaw and brought the other one up beside it pulling himself up slowly. Soon his brother was hauling himself onto the branch, panting with the effort.

Blazekit carefully walked forward to the edge of the branch and gasped in amazement. "C'mon, Flamekit!" he shouted cheerfully. "You have to make it up here! The view is incredible!"

Flamekit knew he couldn't make it, but he refused to be beaten by his brother without an effort.

Right before he was about to jump, he glanced up at the branch one last time. He watched as his brother took one more step forward and Flamekit guessed he was trying to see the Moonpool, all the way above WindClan territory. *He'll never glimpse it, he's not high enough.*

The kit leaned forward slightly. And that's when the tree branch sagged under his weight and Flamekit watched horrified and unable to do anything to help as Blazekit plummeted from the tree with a terrified screech.

A/N: Sorry for not updating today until now but I was busy for most of the day reading Tallstar's Revenge. It's amazing, you should totally get it! :)

Hope you're not too mad at me for leaving you on yet another cliffhanger! :D

Chapter 10

Chapter 10

ThunderClan were the first ones to arrive on the island.

The full moon cast a bright glow on the clearing as Crazystar leapt onto a thin branch of the Dead Oak. The ThunderClan leader remembered her first Gathering that she'd attended with Stonestream, where StarClan had shown its anger by lighting the Great Oak ablaze. Her memories were interrupted when Liontail, who stood at the base of the tree, noticed RiverClan's appearance.

The Clan was led by a familiar red-furred she-cat. It was Crazystar's old friend Salmonstorm, who'd replaced Mosspool as deputy three moons ago. The RiverClan she-cat sprang onto the branch beside her and meowed with her characteristic cheerfulness, "Hi, Crazystar!"

"Hi, Salmon…uh, is Troutstar just ill or something or is she dead?" the ThunderClan leader asked nervously.

The red-furred she-cat stared sadly at the ground. "She's dead," Salmonstar confirmed, speaking in a normal tone of voice. "I received my nine lives from StarClan yesterday night."

"I'm sorry to hear about Troutstar," Crazystar commented. "But congratulations!"

The new RiverClan leader quickly decided to change the topic of conversation to a happier subject. "So I hear you and Stonestream have two little furballs," Salmonstar mentioned the kits curiously. "What are their names?"

Crazystar hadn't realized how much she'd missed the RiverClan she-cat until now. For a moment, she could imagine they were still carefree apprentices sitting in the secret tunnel inside the

RiverClan camp, without the difficult responsibilities of a leader. “Flamekit and Blazekit,” she replied.

“I bet they’re a lot of trouble, but also adorable,” Salmonstar purred. “I might have to make an excuse to visit ThunderClan sometime, so maybe just mention to your warriors not to tear me to shreds please?”

“I’ll think about it,” the gray-furred she-cat teased. “It’s rather tempting to allow them to but…”

“Well, the favor will be returned if you want to see my kits if Hailcloud and I ever have any!” Salmonstar interrupted, and then they both laughed.

Crazystar started to speak but then stopped abruptly. “Oh, great StarClan, no,” she muttered to the RiverClan leader. “Shadestar is here.”

Salmonstar stifled a laugh as Shadestar joined them, glaring at the cats down below. He turned his head towards them. “Your Clan is chattering too much,” he growled to Crazystar before looking at Salmonstar. “And your Clan smells terrible, even more of that pungent fishy odor that usual…”

“Oh, well,” the RiverClan leader sighed. “At least we don’t stink as much as you do.”

Crazystar held her breath, waiting for the ShadowClan tom’s reaction. Shadestar was unpredictable and known for causing trouble at Gatherings. “You just wait until the Gathering starts,” the tom snarled.

WindClan finally showed up. Heatherstar raced over to the Dead Oak and looked apologetically at Salmonstar and Crazystar, wisely ignoring Shadestar. “Sorry that we’re late, but our medicine cat, Longsplash, had to treat one of Kestrelfeather’s kits,” she panted.

Crazystar was once afraid, but now she yowled to start the Gathering with confidence. The friendly conversations died

down. “ThunderClan is well,” she meowed. “We drove a badger out of our territory and Morningblaze should be kitting soon.”

She gently nudged Salmonstorm, who was shifting nervously on her paws. “Um, RiverClan has a river that is filled with fish now that greenleaf has finally arrived,” the RiverClan leader announced. “We have two new apprentices who are both here: Sunpaw and Ripplepaw.”

After the Clans finished chanting the names, she continued. “We mourn the loss of Troutstar, but we are still as strong as ever. I am now leader and Hailcloud is my deputy.”

Heatherstar started to speak, but was rudely interrupted by Shadestar. “ThunderClan and RiverClan have formed an alliance against ShadowClan!” he yowled, looking pointedly over at Salmonstar and Crazystar.

Yowls of protests came from both Clans and both leaders glowered at him. “You and your lies, Shadestar,” Crazystar meowed with disgust. “No one believes you because you don’t even believe yourself! You’re just trying to stir up trouble once again.”

“Prove I’m wrong, you bird-brains and fish-faces,” he growled.

“At least I’m not an ugly-face and Crazystar’s not a no-brain like you are!” Salmonstar retorted, unsheathing her claws.

Shadestar tensed his muscles and clouds passed over the moon. “Stop it!” Crazystar ordered. “StarClan is angry! I think you might remember what happened the last time, Shadestar, so I’d highly advise you not to attack Salmonstar. This Gathering is dismissed, by the will of StarClan!”

Salmonstar and Crazystar both ignored the hostile looks the ShadowClan leader was continuing to send in their direction and leapt down from the tree, with Heatherstar quickly following. “Shadestar is such a worthless mouse-brain,” the ThunderClan leader whispered furiously, and both Heatherstar and Salmonstar nodded in agreement.

Chapter 11

Chapter 11

Whitepaw was extremely frustrated.

Honeywhisker had “punished” him for his “bad attitude” by forcing him to stay home from the Gathering. But she had no idea that was what Whitepaw had wanted…

He’d been looking forward to the moves Thornwhisker or Splashheart would teach him tonight. Instead, he’d had a dumb dream about Crazystar’s kits.

The kits had snuck out of camp. Blazekit stood on a branch of what Whitepaw guessed was the Sky Oak. Flamekit stood on the forest floor below. Blazekit leaned forward, searching for something…and lost his grip.

The young kit screamed in terror, blue eyes widening. He slipped off of the branch and twisted desperately in mid-air, attempting to land on his feet. Blazekit landed with a sickening sound and collapsed to the ground. His brother watched helplessly and rushed towards him.

Flamekit grabbed him by the scruff and began to drag him slowly towards camp, yelling loudly for help…

Whitepaw woke up. *No! I wanted to train in the Dark Forest…*

It was barely moonhigh. The Gathering was probably just starting. The camp was silent but Whitepaw heard a distant cry….

“Wake up!” the medicine cat apprentice shouted without thinking.

Annoyed looking warriors, plus Leafstorm and Morningblaze, stumbled out of their dens. “What in StarClan’s name

was that for, Whitepaw?" Graywhisker demanded.

"Listen!" Whitepaw meowed and the camp fell silent.

The call was growing more desperate with each moment and also becoming quieter. "Please, someone, help!"

Morningblaze padded out of the warriors den. "Great StarClan, I thought I could sleep in the warriors den for one night without having to worry about those two!" Crazystar's sister sighed.

Whitepaw's father, Goldentooth, who was the only senior warrior present at camp, looked quizzically at Morningblaze. "Who is it?" he asked.

"It's Flamekit," she replied.

Instantly, every cat was awake. The warriors all went racing out of the camp entrance.

A little while later, they returned carrying Blazekit towards the medicine cat den, Flamekit following behind dejectedly. *Finally, something interesting to do!* "Whitepaw, can you help…" Goldentooth began.

"Yes!" he exclaimed. "I may not be Honeywhisker, but I do have a brain!"

Whitepaw removed the last pawful of comfrey and a few leaves of thyme for shock from their herb supplies. After forcing them down the unconscious kit's throat, he started to examine Blazekit for injuries. Then, Honeywhisker, apparently just returning from the boring Gathering, came forcing her way inside through the crowd of anxious warriors. "What in StarClan's name happened?" the medicine cat demanded.

"Two kits that belong to a certain leader snuck out of camp," Whitepaw answered.

"Did you give him comfrey? Thyme?" Honeywhisker asked.

“Yes,” Whitepaw sighed with annoyance.

Honeywhisker searched Blazekit for injuries, particularly broken bones, just as Whitepaw had been doing before. She finally glanced up. “His breathing is steady, slightly faster than usual,” the golden she-cat announced. “Heartbeat is strong but more rapid than normal. Hindlegs broken, bones shifted out of position, need to be pushed back to the proper position. Front legs only fractured, will heal on their own. Now Whitepaw hold him still.”

Whitepaw placed a paw on Blazekit’s chest to prevent him from moving. Honeywhisker placed her teeth on his right hind leg and then closed them. Blazekit whimpered in his sleep but did not fidget. She repeated the process on the other leg and then stepped back.

That’s when they heard Crazystar, sounding like she was panicking. “WHERE ARE MY KITS?”

Chapter 12

Chapter 12

Crazystar had freaked out when she found out what the kits had done. Thankfully, Honeywhisker had assured her that Blazekit would survive, but they didn't know quite yet if the kit would be able to walk properly again.

It was the night after that chaotic evening. Whitepaw closed his eyes. *Please, let me go to the Dark Forest tonight…*

He sighed heavily with relief as he found himself surrounded by trees with dark gray bark. The decaying scent was so familiar and comforting now. Strangely, the Place of No Stars felt more like home than ThunderClan.

Splashheart wasn't there. Apparently, Thornwhisker, who stood in front of him, would be leading the training tonight.

The brown tom turned and led him through the forest towards the training clearing without speaking. Whitepaw slowed down momentarily at the sound of growling. He looked in between the tree trunks and saw a small flame-colored RiverClan she-cat leaping at Splashheart. "Why are we training her?" he hissed to Thornwhisker. "She's as small as a kit!"

Thornwhisker glanced back. "All cats have potential," he growled. "That's Splashheart's idea for a new recruit. I personally think it's ridiculous but no one questions his orders unless they wish to die or be severely injured."

In a sandy stretch of land by one of the numerous rivers, Salmonstar, who Whitepaw had heard was the new RiverClan leader, stared fearfully at a dark gray tom. "That's Smokewhisker," Thornwhisker whispered.

"I just realized after the naming ceremony," Salmonstar

meowed. “You’re not StarClan! You’re the Dark Forest! You’re evil and…”

“I was sent here by mistake just because of one little battle Rabbitstar blamed me for causing with ThunderClan…” Smokewhisker began to explain.

“Liar,” a different voice snarled. “Excuses, excuses, excuses. You and your friends always come up with them. You were banished to this disgusting place because you sided with Splashheart.”

A starry white-cat was leading a large group of StarClan warriors towards the training session. “Hello, Cloudstar,” Smokewhisker meowed coldly. “A rather…*unexpected* surprise. I thought you StarClan fools couldn’t cross the border.”

“We can when you have something that belongs to us,” the former ThunderClan leader responded with hostility.

“No! We are the ones who train her, not you!” the dark gray tom shouted angrily.

“Any leader who has not intentionally attempted to harm or kill one of their Clanmates or doesn’t have plans to do anything of the sort is ours,” Cloudstar countered. “Give us the RiverClan leader or face us all now.”

Thornwhisker raced down the slope as Smokewhisker hesitated. Whitepaw followed. “She has the freedom to train where she likes!” the young medicine cat apprentice growled furiously, finding himself annoyed by the way Cloudstar spoke as if he owned the Dark Forest.

He unsheathed his claws and leapt at Cloudstar, but Thornwhisker pulled him back. “I’d like to shred those StarClan furballs as much as you, and I most certainly appreciate your enthusiasm to get rid of those know-it-all tyrants, but we don’t need to get in a fight. Save your energy for training and the battle,” the brown tom whispered.

Whitepaw sank his claws into the black grass to keep himself from accidentally clawing the bossy StarClan warriors. It was so tempting, but Thornwhisker's orders…

"Yes, I'm sure you don't want to fight now. You just want to wait until you have time to execute your 'perfect plan' and I'm sure it'll come rather shocking to you when you lose horrifically!" Cloudstar tossed out the insult, raising an eyebrow mockingly as if daring them to say anything in reply or to attack him.

Smokewhisker shoved the RiverClan leader forward. "Take your dumb leader," he growled. "One pathetic cat, nine lives or not, won't save you and your wimpy Clans."

Cloudstar signaled with his tail for the StarClan cats to turn back towards their territory and then beckoned for Salmonstar to follow. "Thank you," the red-furred she-cat stammered.

Cloudstar gave a quick nod and disappeared into the distance soon, leading the RiverClan leader out of the forest.

Whitepaw narrowed his eyes. *How can she not see how much better life will be once Splashheart has taken over?*

Chapter 13

Chapter 13

Flamekit missed his brother.

They had been just shy of four moons old when Blazekit took the nasty fall out of the tree. He had just been allowed out of the medicine cat den two days ago, limping heavily and the majority of his weight being supported by Crazystar. Currently, they were both six moons old, the age when they were supposed to become apprentices. Flamekit wondered though if Crazystar would delay the ceremony until Blazekit was ready though. Even though it was probably considered selfish on his behalf, he hoped she didn't.

Morningblaze's kits were two moons old. Petalkit was a cream-colored she-cat with sparkling blue eyes and fit Flamekit's definition of pretty. Rosekit wasn't bad-looking either though, with reddish-orange fur and amber eyes. Crazystar said she looked almost exactly like Salmonstar, the RiverClan leader.

The only other news was that Rainfoot, one of ThunderClan's oldest warriors, had finally chosen to move to the elders den, joining Leafstorm.

Petalkit scampered up to him, her sister Rosekit following behind at a slower pace. "What's wrong? You look sad," she commented. "You're not mad at me, are you?"

Flamekit sighed and shook his head. "No, I'm just worried about Blazekit," he replied.

Petalkit sat down and thought for a while. "I know!" she shouted finally, bouncing up and down. "A game will cheer you up! Do you want to play with us? We can pretend like ShadowClan is attacking and escape from the camp through the secret entrance!"

Games are for kits. Besides, I don't want to play without my

brother.

But Flamekit knew the kit was only trying to help, and that if he said no, she'd take offense. He looked at Morningblaze, who was watching from nearby, for permission. His mother's sister nodded. "Sure," he told Petalkit, and her face brightened.

"Great!" she exclaimed.

Petalkit looked to Rosekit and then shouted, "Flamekit! Rosekit! ShadowClan is attacking!"

Leafstorm and Rainfoot stumbled out of the elders den. "Great StarClan, not ShadowClan too…" the former ThunderClan deputy muttered before realizing that it was Petalkit who'd given the fake warning.

Petalkit rushed over to the camp wall and beckoned for Flamekit and Rosekit to follow. Flamekit leapt up first, jumping from ledge to ledge with ease. Petalkit came next and her sister followed more hesitantly. He reached the top of the wall long before the two she-cats and stood waiting.

Petalkit was very close now and Rosekit was following behind, only barely trailing behind her sister. Suddenly, Petalkit screamed and lost her footing, crashing into Rosekit. The two sisters struggled for a pawhold and Flamekit knew they couldn't hold on for long.

He leaned carefully over the wall and saw Morningblaze rushing towards the scene. *She'll be too late unless I do something…*

Petalkit was closest, so he grabbed her first, pulling her to safety. The cream-colored she-cat's eyes were wide with fear. "Thanks," she panted as Flamekit reached back down to retrieve her sister.

Just as Flamekit's teeth met her scruff, Rosekit lost her grip. He tightened his teeth around her fur and began to haul her upward.

But then, Rosekit moved ever so slightly and she slid out

of Flamekit's grasp, plummeting down towards the stone hollow. Morningblaze screamed and Flamekit sprinted through the forest, narrowly avoiding crashing into trees. He burst through the camp entrance, Petalkit arriving shortly after, and skidded to a halt by the red-furred she-cat,

This was much worse than Blazekit's injury. Her head was twisted sideways and she lay on the ground, unmoving and flanks still.

Honeywhisker came over and unlike with Blazekit, she didn't need to do anything other than see Rosekit's lifeless body sprawled out in front of her to know what was wrong. She looked sorrowfully at Morningblaze, who was covering her kit's fur with desperate licks. "Morningblaze, Rosekit is dead," the medicine cat meowed quietly.

Flamekit collapsed onto the ground. "No!" he wailed. "It's all my fault."

Morningblaze glanced up momentarily. "No, Flamekit, it's not," she whispered. "You tried to save her. Petalkit would be dead too if it wasn't for you."

Flamekit just stared at the ground. "No, it is my fault," he hissed, too quietly for anyone else to hear.

Suddenly, another voice belonging to a certain gray-furred she-cat yowled, "Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey join beneath the Highledge for a Clan meeting!"

A/N: Been having Internet problems all day, just now managed to get it working long enough to post this. Might not update again, because it's a national holiday in my country and I'm going to see fireworks(if it actually stops raining). If not, you can at least look forward to another update :)

Happy Fourth of July for my wonderful readers who are Americans! :) For my also equally as wonderful non-American readers, happy unofficial Jayfeather Day! :)

Chapter 14

Chapter 14

Flamekit half-heartedly glanced up. Crazystar stood on the Highledge, looking at her sister with pity in her green eyes. “I know how painful it is to have an injured kit, and I can only imagine how much worse it is if one of them dies,” the gray-furred she-cat meowed. “We mourn the loss of Rosekit, but we are ThunderClan! We will recover and remain strong!”

A few cats began to chant, “ThunderClan! ThunderClan!”

Crazystar waited patiently for them to stop. “I have a ceremony planned to lighten the mood, hopefully,” she continued. “Redpaw has trained hard and I believe she is deserving of her warrior name. She passed the final assessment yesterday and her mentor, Brightleaf, assures me that she will be a worthy warrior of my Clan.”

Sadness tugged at his heart, knowing Blazekit should be sitting here in front of the nursery with him, and both Petalkit and Rosekit should be there behind him. And they would be, if Flamekit could’ve stopped his brother and had a better grip on Rosekit’s scruff. Rosekit was dead and Blazekit was injured because of him.

He shook his head and tried to focus. He searched through the crowd for Redpaw and saw her staring at Highledge in surprise. To her right, Whitepaw looked angry. The grumpy medicine cat apprentice still hadn’t received his full name and the fact that Redpaw was about to get her warrior name probably put him in even more of a bad mood than usual.

“Redpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to defend and protect this Clan, even at the cost of your life?” Flamekit realized that he’d missed part of the ceremony.

I wish I could forget about Rosekit and Blazekit. But I can’t.

The red-furred she-cat hesitantly made her way through the crowd until she stood directly beneath the Highledge. She lifted her head and met Crazystar's eyes. "I do," she declared, raising her head even higher at the statement.

Crazystar seemed amused and pleased. "Then by the powers of StarClan, I give you your warrior name," the ThunderClan leader went on. "From this moment on, you will be known as Redwhisker. Redwhisker, remember that every cat has their strengths and weaknesses. I noticed how hard you worked at fighting and also realized that you're a remarkable hunter. StarClan honors your perseverance and confidence and we welcome you as a full warrior of ThunderClan!"

Redwhisker looked like she didn't believe the moment had finally come, and Flamekit couldn't help but envy her. *I wish I was just warrior! And if I could make two wishes, I'd wish that I could stop cats I care about from being hurt like this…*

Flamekit sighed and joined in with the rest of the members of his Clan as they loudly shouted her new name to the sky. *Well, I guess now the meeting is over…*

"I have something else to announce," Flamekit was surprised to hear Crazystar speak again. "Flamekit, you are six moons old. I wish as much as you do, if not more, that Blazekit could be there with you, but I can't delay your apprentice ceremony as that would be unfair to you. I know the loss of Rosekit is an awful tragedy that I wouldn't wish upon any queen, but let us all recall that if it weren't for Flamekit, Petalkit would be with StarClan as well."

Flamekit felt even more shocked and excited than Redwhisker probably had when she got her warrior name. He pushed his way through the group of warriors. "I suppose I don't need to tell you to step forward, do I?" Crazystar purred. "From this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Flamepaw."

I hope I get a good mentor!

“Hawkwhisker, it has been a while since you had an apprentice. You will be mentor to Flamepaw. I hope you pass on everything you know to him and train him well,” his mother concluded.

Flamepaw couldn’t believe it. *I’m an apprentice!*

He eagerly touched noses with Hawkwhisker and listened to the voices of his Clan, all calling his new name and cheering for him. “When can we start training?” he asked quietly.

“Tomorrow morning,” Hawkwhisker whispered. “By the way, remember that you’re sleeping in the apprentices den tonight.”

But the happiness slowly died to be replaced by guilt. Guilt because his brother should be there too.

Blazekit hopped over awkwardly, stumbling and wincing in pain. Flamepaw walked over to him. “I’m sorry, Blazekit…” he began.

Blazekit shook his head. “It was my own dumb idea to climb that tree, it’s not your fault, mouse-brain!” he sighed. “Just you better learn a lot and train pretty quickly because I’ll be there soon and then you’re in trouble.”

“Yeah, right!” Flamepaw teased.

As his brother walked away, Flamepaw started to feel a little bit better. He replayed Blazekit’s words in his head. *Not your fault…*

A/N: Flamepaw is finally an apprentice! :)

Chapter 15

Chapter 15

As the cats arrived at Moonpool, Honeywhisker meowed, “Before we meet with StarClan, I have a special ceremony to perform.”

Finally, it’s about time! Redwhisker has been a warrior for over a moon!

“You don’t deserve it,” she whispered almost inaudibly. “But I guess I had to give it to you sometime.”

Whitepaw straightened proudly, ignoring Honeywhisker’s comment. *Thornwhisker would’ve given me my full name moons ago.*

“I, Honeywhisker, medicine cat of ThunderClan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on this apprentice,” the golden she-cat started the ceremony. “He has trained hard to understand the ways of a medicine cat, and with your help he will serve his Clan for many moons.”

“Congratulations, Whitepaw!” the apprentice heard Longsplash call out quietly, and Leafwhisker said something similar.

“Whitepaw, do you promise to uphold the ways of a medicine cat, to stand apart from rivalry between Clan and Clan and to protect all cats equally, even at the cost of your life?” Honeywhisker asked.

He wouldn’t. He would fight for SplashClan and SplashClan only but he didn’t care. He wanted his name and no one would know it was a lie until it was way too late. “I do,” he responded, meeting Honeywhisker’s amber gaze without flinching.

“Then by the powers of StarClan, I give you your true name as a medicine cat. Whitepaw, from this moment on, you will

be known as Whitefur," she named him. "StarClan honors your intelligence and courage and we welcome you as a full medicine cat of ThunderClan."

The small crowd of medicine cats chanted his name, and Whitefur couldn't help but notice how pathetic it was compared to Redwhisker's ceremony. He closed his eyes and touched his nose to the Moonpool.

Unlike the other medicine cats, he woke up in the Dark Forest, not the boring sunny fields of StarClan.

Thornwhisker was there. "Hey, Whitefur, Splashheart is training someone else tonight again but we're going to go meet them and train as a team. This cat still believes in the warrior code but try not to shred her fur off since Splashheart thinks we can still convince her of the truth," the brown tom meowed.

"You know about the naming ceremony?" Whitefur asked.

Thornwhisker nodded. "C'mon, let's get going, Splashheart is already waiting," he meowed.

The brown tom took him to the same sandy stretch of land where Salmonstar had trained before the dumb StarClan cats had stolen her from the Place of No Stars. Splashheart was attacking the same undersized she-cat that Whitefur had glimpsed on that night.

The she-cat stopped when she saw him. "You didn't mention I'd be training with him!" she spat crossly. "He's the one who insulted…"

"Well, I'm not too pleased to see you either. Thornwhisker didn't mention I'd be training with miniature kits," Whitepaw growled. "So I incorrectly assumed I'd be training with decent-sized warriors."

"I am a warrior!" she snarled, fur bristling.

"Now, now, let's be nice to each other," Splashheart

interrupted the conversation. “Introduce yourselves.”

“Whitefur, currently belonging to ThunderClan, wishing I lived in SplashClan,” he muttered, still glaring at her.

“Tawnyflame, *warrior* of RiverClan,” she snapped.

“Nice to meet you, Tawnykit,” Whitefur meowed with fake pleasantness.

“Whitefur, stop it!” Splashheart shouted fiercely. “This is not a way to treat a newcomer! Now you’re going to attack each other. I know we usually train with claws unsheathed, but since Whitefur can be particularly vicious, today it’ll be claws sheathed only.”

“What?” Whitefur was outraged, and he couldn’t stop the words from flying out of his mouth. “Is she too scared and wimpy to fight like a real warrior?”

“Whitefur, it’s just for one night and it’s still practice,” Splashheart sighed. “Now attack!”

The medicine cat leapt at her and she sidestepped. *Beginner’s move.*

He twisted and lashed out with sheathed claws, hitting her in the face. She tried to retaliate, but he dodged the blow with ease. He positioned himself in front of her as she charged and spun around, kicking her in the face with his hind legs. Before she recovered, he had turned back around and ran his claws across her throat. “And then you’d be dead,” the young tom stated.

“Very good, Whitefur! Now show Tawnyflame how you did it,” Splashheart ordered.

Whitefur demonstrated the move in slow motion. He stopped and glanced at the gray-and-white tom, who gave him an approving nod. “A perfect move for killing your leader when the time comes. They’d never expect it!” he meowed with satisfaction.

“Why in StarClan’s name would I kill Salmonstar?” she

asked, narrowing her eyes.

"Don't use the word StarClan here," Whitefur growled. "The warrior code is flawed. We need to take over the Clans and unite them under Splashheart's leadership. Weaknesses like the elders and journeys to the Moonpool? Gone. And…"

"The Clans may have made a few small mistakes, but the warrior code does not need to be changed!" Tawnyflame protested. "It has worked for seasons and now you want to…"

Quick as lightning, Whitefur gave a strong push and knocked her over. He unsheathed his claws and raked them repeatedly down her stomach. She tried to escape his grasp but her attempts were fruitless.

Whitefur heard rushing pawsteps behind them and was soon being dragged away from the flame-colored RiverClan she-cat by Thornwhisker. "Whitefur, clawing her to death is not how you get a cat to realize the truth!" Splashheart hissed angrily.

"Not only do you look like a kit, but you fight like one too," he taunted.

"Whitefur, I said that's enough!" Splashheart screeched. "Thornwhisker, I guess this wasn't such a good idea. Take Whitefur and train in the Decaying Hollow."

The white-furred tom shot one last look of animosity at Tawnyflame before following Thornwhisker.

A/N: Bubblybluebananas is writing a story called Tawnystar's Secret, which takes place at the same time as this book. Both books will be based on Splashheart leading the Dark Forest to attack the Clans. The only differences are that Tawnyflame is a RiverClan cat while I focus on ThunderClan and that our RiverClan characters(except for Tawnyflame) are different :)

Hope you enjoyed, and if you're looking for a book to read while waiting for me to finally come out with the next chapter, Tawnystar's Secret is a good choice :D

Chapter 16

Chapter 16

Yet another long moon as a medicine cat had passed since his fight with Tawnyflame.

"Tonight is the Gathering," Honeywhisker meowed as she sorted through a pile of herbs. "Your first as a full medicine cat!"

Why would I actually be excited or want to go to that dumb meeting?

"You know, I'm kind of tired," Whitefur lied, faking a yawn. "I'd prefer to stay home if that is okay with you and Crazystar so…"

"What is it with you and Gatherings?" Honeywhisker demanded. "You haven't gone to one since you first became an apprentice! You are going whether you like it or not! The Clan needs both of its medicine cats there!"

Whitefur glared at her for a moment until realizing she wouldn't give in. "Fine," he growled, wishing he could go to the Dark Forest instead of the Gathering…

***

The full moon was high above their heads as Whitefur climbed onto the tree-bridge. The last time when he'd been here as a new apprentice, the rotting bark had felt slippery, but Thornwhisker's tree-climbing training in the Place of No Stars helped a lot. He crossed with ease and leapt down onto the island.

Once he was in the clearing, he didn't socialize with the warriors from other Clans or hang out with his fellow medicine cats. Instead, he sat down just in front of the Dead Oak and waited for the long meeting to finally begin.

Redwhisker came up next to him. “What’s wrong?” she asked, her voice filled with concern. “Are you okay?”

Whitefur forced down his annoyance and frustration. *I wish she would just leave me alone!*

“I’m fine,” he replied quietly. “Just don’t want to be here.”

“Why?” she asked curiously. “It’s fun to meet the other Clans!”

“It’s fun to pretend like you’re friends with your greatest enemies?” Whitefur demanded. “To hear boring news from other leaders? Prey’s running fine and we have two new warriors, yay!”

“Whitefur, Gatherings are more than that!” Redwhisker exclaimed in shock. “Listen to the apprentices of another Clan talk and you can learn their secrets!”

Maybe she isn’t as hopeless as I thought.

He saw a group of wimpy looking ShadowClan apprentices talking to each other. “I’ll go force them to tell me their secrets!” he declared triumphantly, rising to his paws.

“Whitefur, no!” Redwhisker shouted, pulling him back. “You can’t fight with other Clans at Gatherings! The last time that happened, StarClan set the island on fire!”

“StarClan couldn’t hurt a mouse,” Whitefur snorted.

His sister stared at him, speechless. Whitefur realized he had to say something to calm her down. “Ha, sorry, didn’t think I’d actually fool you,” he lied, managing a false laugh. “I was just kidding, I know better than most cats how powerful StarClan can be.”

And that’s not powerful at all.

Whitefur closed his eyes and pictured that arrogant Cloudstar. He imagined running his claws across the coward’s

throat and warm, salty blood covering his paws. “Whitefur!” Redwhisker called, snapping him out of his dream. “That isn’t funny! I actually believed you! Do you realize what would’ve happened if…”

“Well, then, quit being so gullible!” he snapped. “You’re no fun anymore!”

Redwhisker flinched backwards, looking hurt. Whitefur sighed and turned away. At that instant, Heatherstar yowled for the start of the Gathering. “WindClan is fine,” she began. “One of our queens, Gorsecloud, had three beautiful kits who will soon be wonderful warriors.”

Heatherstar stepped back and was replaced by Ivystorm, the ShadowClan deputy. Whitefur guessed she was now known as Ivystar. “Nothing bad has happened to ShadowClan, except for the loss of Shadestar…” the ShadowClan leader started, to be cut off by a collective cheer from the cats below.

Ivystar glowered at the crowd, but Whitefur and probably everyone else could tell she was desperately trying to hide a laugh. She just nodded quickly and Crazystar spoke. “ThunderClan is well. Our medicine cat apprentice, Whitefur, has received his full name and the prey is plentiful,” the ThunderClan leader announced.

The prey isn’t plentiful. We’re nearing the end of leaf-fall.

Salmonstar was last. “The river hasn’t frozen yet, so prey is plentiful. We have a new apprentice, Stormpaw,” the red-furred she-cat declared. “I am expecting Icewhisker’s kits so I may not be present at the next Gathering. On a less pleasant topic, my deputy Hailcloud was killed by a fox. My new deputy is Tawnyflame.”

That annoying flame-colored she-cat? She doesn’t even deserve to be a warrior!

“Oh, no, not her!” Whitefur blurted out.

Salmonstar looked questioningly at Crazystar, who shot a

menacing look at the medicine cat. Tawnyflame's eyes were even angrier, looking straight at Whitefur. Redwhisker shifted self-consciously beside him. Even the white-furred tom felt a little nervous about what Crazystar would do. "Sorry, I didn't mean to say that out loud," he muttered.

Crazystar glared at him for a little while longer. "I don't expect you to say another word, Whitefur. You have my apologies, Salmonstar," the gray-furred she-cat growled.

Salmonstar nodded. "Anyhow, unless there is any other news to be shared, this Gathering is dismissed!" she finished.

Oh, great. Now if she sees me again during training, she'll want to brag about how she's so special because Salmonstar made the horrible mistake of choosing her as deputy…

A/N: I just had to mention that my favorite part of this chapter is where everyone cheers when Ivystar announces Shadestar's death :)

Chapter 17

Chapter 17

It was a normal day, and Flamepaw was on the dawn patrol along the WindClan border. He'd been an apprentice for over four moons now, and his brother, Blazepaw, had joined him a little less than three moons ago. His brother's right hindleg hadn't healed properly, leaving Blazepaw with an awkward limp, but he'd learned to fight despite the injury. Just yesterday, Petalpaw had finally left the company of Mousestorm's kits, Breezekit, Smallkit, and Dewkit.

"Strong scent of RiverClan," Blazepaw reported, limping ahead of Flamepaw.

Stonestream, who was leading the patrol, halted. "RiverClan? Why in StarClan's name would RiverClan be on this side of the lake?" Flamepaw's father asked.

Blazepaw didn't answer. Instead, he stared at a bush that was rustling ever so slightly and Flamepaw caught a glimpse of red fur.*Fox…no, that's a cat…*

Stonestream noticed too. "ThunderClan, attack!" he shouted.

Blazepaw and Flamepaw both worked together to pull the red-furred she-cat out of the bush and were shocked to see it was Salmonstar, the RiverClan leader. Stonestream and Blackwing attacked the other two cats.

Salmonstar twisted away from them and scrambled to her feet. "Stop it! We came to talk to Crazystar, not to fight!" she shouted.

"What would you want to do with my leader?" Stonestream demanded.

“You were there in the RiverClan camp! You know better than most cats why Crazystar and I are friends,” the RiverClan leader meowed. “I came to meet her kits.”

Stonestream nodded to Blazepaw and Flamepaw. “Those are *our* kits,” he meowed.

“I didn’t know they were apprentices yet!” Salmonstar purred. “So I assume you’re Blazepaw and Flamepaw? Which one of you is Blazepaw and which one of you is Flamepaw?”

“I’m Flamepaw and that’s Blazepaw,” the flame-colored tom answered.

“Would you mind taking me back to camp?” the red-furred she-cat asked, but Flamepaw suspected she was asking Stonestream as well. “I want to say hi to Crazystar while I’m still on this side of the lake.”

Stonestream met her amber gaze and sighed. “Only if the rest of your patrol goes back to the RiverClan camp,” he growled.

Salmonstar hesitated. “Fine,” she responded. “Leopardtooth, Berryfur, you can go back to camp.”

As soon as the two warriors were gone, Stonestream started the walk back to camp. Salmonstar tried to have a friendly conversation with the two brothers. “So how’s training?” she asked.

“Fine, battle training is the best,” Flamepaw replied.

“No, hunting is better!” Blazepaw protested.

Salmonstar laughed. “Do you think the weather is fine?” she continued the conversation.

“I don’t know, it is a little bit cold,” Flamepaw meowed.

“A little bit is an understatement,” his brother grumbled.

“It isn’t really cold until the river freezes and it starts snowing,” she chuckled. “Just you wait until leaf-bare.”

“Still as talkative as ever, Salmonstar, aren’t you?” Stonestream called over his shoulder.

“No!” Salmonstar shouted. “I’m even more talkative.”

Stonestream couldn’t help but laugh. “Well, we’re at camp now, so you can go annoy Crazystar instead of my kits,” he meowed teasingly.

Salmonstar gave him a playful shove before climbing the Highledge.

A cream-colored she-cat walked over to him with a two mice in her jaws. She settled down beside Flamepaw. “Hi! I brought you a mouse. Do you want to…” Petalpaw began.

He sat down. “Sure,” he replied and she tossed him a mouse.

He ripped into the juicy meat. The warm, rich flavor filled his mouth and he sighed happily. “So I hear you and Blazepaw had your final assessment yesterday?” Petalpaw meowed.

“Yeah,” Flamepaw answered, recalling how nervous he’d been.

“And? Did you pass?” she asked.

He lowered his head. “I don’t know,” he whispered. “They never said anything so…”

“I’m sure you did!” Petalpaw meowed encouragingly. “You’re awesome at everything especially that leap and turn move Graywhisker just taught me that I can’t do properly!”

“I just don’t know and I wish I did,” he murmured.

Just then, Crazystar came out onto the Highledge. “Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey…”

“It’s your naming ceremony!” Petalpaw exclaimed excitedly.

Flamepaw wasn't so certain until Crazystar called, "Flamepaw, Blazepaw, step forward."

He trembled with excitement. It was finally here! All the training would be worthwhile….

"I, Crazystar, leader of ThunderClan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down upon these two apprentices. They have trained hard to understand the ways of your noble code and I commend them to you as warriors in their turn. Blazepaw and Flamepaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend this Clan, even at the cost of your life?" she asked.

"I do!" Flamepaw declared, and Blazepaw's voice echoed his statement.

"Then by the powers of StarClan, I give you your warrior names," the gray-furred she-cat continued. "Blazepaw, from this moment on, you will be known as Blazestorm. StarClan honors your determination and talent, and we welcome you as a full warrior of ThunderClan."

Now it's my turn!

"Flamepaw, from this moment on, you will be known as Flamestripe," his mother announced. "StarClan honors your courage and loyalty and we welcome you as a full warrior of our Clan. My kits, I couldn't be more proud of you than I am right now."

Flamestripe! That's a cool name!

The Clan chanted the names and Petalpaw was the first to come congratulate him. "Flamestripe!" she purred. "I guess you've had the fortune of escaping from me for another few moons. But don't worry, you'll have to put up with me again soon!"

Flamestripe and Blazestorm exchanged glances and then walked to the center of the camp as the noise died down. Their silent vigil was about to begin…

Chapter 18

Chapter 18

When Whitefur had entered the Dark Forest the previous night, Thornwhisker had meowed, “You’re fighting Tawnyflame tonight.”

Before Whitefur could complain, he continued, “Splashheart told her to ‘go easy on you’ last time, so she still thinks she can win. So tonight, he wants you to let her win. She’s going to attack you with her best moves, which aren’t that good, but you can see how she fights. And then tomorrow, you both fight with your best skills and we know who will win.”

She hardly tears off any fur. It’s much more painful when you train with a real warrior like Thornwhisker or Splashheart.

She’s too small to actually knock me over unless I let her.

Her leap? She wouldn’t have cleared my head unless I ducked like I did.

Her twist is so slow. You can totally see where she’s going.

And tonight, now that Whitefur was finally allowed to rip all of her fur off, he was going to win.

Tawnyflame stood in front of him. “Hey, did you come back to get beaten again?” she asked.

“No, I came to tear you to shreds,” he growled, unsheathing his claws.

The flame-colored she-cat lifted her head confidently. “Try it,” she challenged him.

Whitefur tensed his muscles. “I’d be glad to,” he responded.

Tawnyflame assumed he'd leap and jumped backwards. Whitefur dropped to the ground, rolling forward, and sprang upwards right when he was underneath her head. She staggered backwards, barely getting out of the way in time.

Tawnyflame regained her footing and lunged forward. Whitefur allowed himself to be pushed back against the river and then grabbed her scruff, dragging her into it. "You mouse-brain!" Tawnyflame snorted. "I'm a RiverClan cat! It's obvious I can swim!"

She tried to climb out but Whitefur leapt at her, crashing into her and sending her tumbling back into the warm, slimy river. The medicine cat waded into it, kicking out strongly despite the tough currents. Tawnyflame looked shocked. "How can you swim? You're a ThunderClan cat!"

Whitefur guessed that Splashheart hadn't given her river training, like Thornwhisker had given him. He grabbed her by the neck again and dragged her underneath the water, holding his own breath as he ducked down beneath the surface. He placed his forepaws on her back, holding her down. He came up for air, gasping for breath. Tawnyflame thrashed desperately, trying to escape.

Her attempts became weaker and weaker. "Whitefur has won!" Splashheart finally declared. "Now let her come up."

Whitefur stepped back and started to swim back towards the sandy river shore. And that's when he realized that Tawnyflame hadn't resurfaced.

"Whitefur! Pull her out!" Splashheart ordered.

"She's siding with the Clans! Let her die!" Whitefur snarled.

"There's still hope for her and that's an order, not a question! Get her out of that river!" Splashheart shouted, beginning to march down towards the stream.

If I don't pull her out, Splashheart will anyways and I'll be in trouble.

He sighed and reached underwater, grabbing Tawnyflame by the scruff and hauling her back to the surface. He swam back, tossing her limp body onto land.

Whitefur reached up and pulled himself out. He shook himself, trying to get all of the water droplets out of his fur, and watched as Tawnyflame lay there on the ground, unmoving. "Whitefur, you have medicine cat training. Get her to cough up the water!" Splashheart growled.

Whitefur placed his paws on her throat, knowing it was actually supposed to be her chest. He finally stepped back. "Sorry, it's not working," he meowed.

Splashheart narrowed his amber eyes. "I may not be a medicine cat, but I know that's a lie," he grumbled. "You're just not doing whatever you're actually supposed to do."

He rolled his eyes. *I wish they would just let her die…*

Whitefur placed his paws on her chest and pressed down. A shudder passed through her body and she weakly coughed up a mouthful of slimy water onto the ground. Her eyelids weakly fluttered open and Whitefur felt hatred for this pathetic RiverClan deputy.

Before he realized it, he was raking his claws across her belly repeatedly. He leaned back, raising a paw for the death blow…

"Whitefur, what is wrong with you?" Splashheart demanded as he knocked the young tom off of Tawnyflame. "She's still is a possible ally!"

"I don't know what you see in her," Whitefur growled. "She believes in that wimpy StarClan and she thinks the warrior code is worth saving!"

"I see that she's the deputy of RiverClan, and that one

day, she'll be leader! Don't you see that she could be valuable if she sides with us?" Splashheart asked.

"But she isn't going to," Whitefur protested.

Splashheart looked Whitefur in the eye. "Oh yes, she will, one way or another," he promised with a sinister laugh.

Chapter 19

Chapter 19

"StarClan honors your enthusiasm and perseverance, and we welcome you as a full warrior of our Clan," Crazystar finished.

"Petalfall! Petalfall!" Flamestripe tried to cheer louder than anyone else for the cream-colored she-cat.

He rushed over to her. "Congratulations, you're a warrior at last!" he meowed.

Petalfall nodded. Flamestripe watched as Morningblaze guided her kit to the center of the snow-covered clearing to start her vigil. It felt like only yesterday that he'd become an apprentice…

***

It was the next night and Flamestripe settled down in his nest in the warriors den, Petalfall comfortably sleeping beside him.

He closed his eyes and let himself be carried into the world of dreams, hoping tonight would be one of the rare occasions when he didn't have the terrible nightmare…

Flamestripe found himself once again in the stone hollow, fighting a lot of angry warriors. This time, the cat from his Clan that was there was Oakstream, mercilessly raking his claws down Flamestripe's stomach.

Despite knowing now it was just a dream, it was still incredibly painful. Oakstream stepped back and Flamestripe tried to turn his head away from the horrifying scene he knew was about to come. But he couldn't.

The nightmare ended the same way it always did. A gray-and-white tom sliced his claws across Crazystar's throat and she

collapsed onto the ground, eyes distant and lifeless…

Flamestripe was relieved as always to wake up. Petalfall was rising to her feet next to him and he followed her out into the camp.

That's when he heard the violent coughing. Honeywhisker was leading Liontail into her den. "Whitefur, get some catmint!" she ordered.

Petalfall looked nervously at Flamestripe. "Catmint? Does that mean…" she began to ask.

"Yes, probably. I'm guessing Liontail has greencough," he replied, trying to keep the fear out of his voice.

They were both silent for a long moment. "Let's go hunting," Petalfall suggested. "It's better than worrying about that."

***

Three days later, Flamestripe stood next to his mother outside of the medicine cat den as she looked sadly at Liontail, who was coughing almost nonstop. "Crazystar, I'll see you in StarClan…" the deputy rasped.

His flanks heaved as he coughed one last time and then a shudder passed through his body.

Liontail was dead.

Crazystar fell to the ground. "No, he can't be gone, I still need him," she whispered in a panicky tone of voice.

"It's okay," Flamestripe tried to soothe his mother.

"No," she responded. "No, it's not okay."

Honeywhisker looked up. "Crazystar, Liontail wouldn't want you to grieve for long. It was past moonrise when he died, you need to appoint a new deputy now. It's nearly moonhigh," the medicine cat meowed.

Crazystar numbly rose to her feet and climbed up the Highledge. Flamestripe watched as she summoned the Clan. “I have terrible news. Liontail is dead,” the gray-furred she-cat announced, her voice filled with sorrow. “I say these words before StarClan and the spirit of Liontail, that they may hear and approve of my choice. Stonestream will be the new deputy of ThunderClan.”

Flamestripe’s father looked stunned. A few cats hesitantly began to chant his name. Flamestripe joined in, shouting his father’s name almost as loud as he’d done for Petalfall.

“Thank you, Crazystar,” Stonestream managed. “I will do my best.”

Crazystar looked at him, true love shining brightly in her green eyes. “I know you will,” she murmured.

A/N: Sorry that it's not longer, but yay, Stonestream is deputy! :) Don't worry Liontail, we are sad about you, we're just happy for Stonestream...

Chapter 20

Chapter 20

Flamestripe crept forward stealthily, careful not to make a sound. A mouse stood on the grass in front of him, and he was glad for the warm newleaf winds melting the snow and bringing back the prey. He pounced and killed the creature with a sharp nip to its spine. “Great job!” Petalfall called.

“Thanks, but your catch is more impressive,” he meowed, nodding to the huge squirrel in her jaws.

They walked back to camp. Flamestripe was painfully aware of her presence next to him. He loved her so much, but he was too scared to say it. He loved her energetic personality, the way she dashed into every task fearlessly, her talents in both hunting and fighting, and her beautiful cream-colored fur. But how could any cat as flawless as her like a not so perfect cat like him?

These troubled thoughts floated through his mind as he walked back to camp. Petalfall looked like she’d gained weight during leaf-bare, despite the fact that prey wasn’t plentiful. *She needs to take less food from the fresh-kill, I guess.*

Flamestripe dropped his mouse on the fresh-kill pile when they arrived at camp, but Petalfall held onto her squirrel. “Want to share this?” she offered.

“Sure,” he meowed, eager to spend more time with her.

They settled down as the moon was just rising, the warriors of StarClan appearing in the sky. Petalfall took a few bites and then pushed the rest to Flamestripe. “I’m not hungry,” she meowed.

“Are you sure?” he asked.

"Yeah," she replied. "So how's Blazestorm?"

"Fine," Flamestripe answered through a mouthful of squirrel. "He caught two thrushes the other day, and newleaf is just starting!"

"He was always a good hunter," Petalfall commented.

"You're better though," he noted.

She laughed. Suddenly, Honeywhisker was next to them. "Petalfall, I need to talk to you in my den," the medicine cat meowed.

Petalfall stopped laughing and rose to her feet. "See you in the warriors den. Good night!" she shouted as she followed the golden she-cat.

"Good night!" Flamestripe called, but he had no intentions of going to the warriors den.

As soon as Petalfall and Honeywhisker disappeared inside, Flamestripe trotted towards the medicine cat den. "You have to tell him!" the ThunderClan medicine screeched. "He's going to find out eventually anyways!"

"I can't," Petalfall responded, sounding absolutely miserable.

Are they talking about me? And tell me what? Has she noticed that I love her and she's too nice to tell me she doesn't feel the same way?

Not wanting to hear anymore, Flamestripe walked into the warriors den and settled down in his nest. He heard Petalfall come in, and even though he was still awake, he pretended to be asleep. He finally drifted off, and for once, he didn't have the battle dream. Instead, he had an even worse nightmare…

Petalfall kept insulting him over and over again, and telling him that she didn't even like him, let alone love him. Flamestripe ran through the forest, but she followed him, appearing

wherever he went. “Wake up!” he urged himself, trying to block out the sound of her voice. “WAKE UP!”

It worked. He blinked open his eyes as dawn light was just starting to flood through the entrance to the warriors den. Petalfall was already gone. He stretched slowly in the warm sunshine and then padded out into camp.

The beautiful cream-colored she-cat was resting in the middle of camp. She saw him and started to walk in his direction.

Oh, no. Flamestripe braced himself for the words that were certain to come next.

Petalfall looked extremely nervous and uncomfortable. “Um, hi,” she managed.

“Hi,” Flamestripe echoed her greeting.

“Well, um, I have something I need to tell you,” she began.

He tried to act normal. “What is it?” he asked, raising an eyebrow.

“Flamestripe, I’m expecting your kits,” Petalfall replied shakily.

He was shocked. “That’s amazing!” he purred. “I can’t wait to meet them.”

“You mean you aren’t upset?” she meowed hopefully.

“Of course not! Petalfall, I love you!” the words flew out of his mouth before he could stop himself.

She looked up, eyes widening. “I love you too,” she whispered, and there was no way Flamestripe could’ve been happier.

A/N: Now I bet everyone is wondering, "Why has Crazystar updated this story four times today? That NEVER happens!"

Well, just a little warning, I might not be able to update tomorrow so I thought I'd do some extra writing today :) Hope you enjoyed and may StarClan light your path!

Chapter 21

Chapter 21

"Now is the time! We destroy the warrior code that is holding the Clans back from true greatness!" Splashheart yowled.

Whitefur couldn't believe it. The most important event of his whole life was about to happen. *And there is no way the Clans will win!*

Splashheart looked at Tawnyflame. "Tawnystar, are you ready?" he asked.

She's leader already? Didn't Salmonstar just become leader, like, two seasons ago?

"Um, yes!" the flame-colored she-cat shouted.

Splashheart looked unconvinced. "You better choose the right side," he growled.

Tawnystar lifted her head and stared back defiantly. "Don't worry, I will," she responded, and Whitefur guessed she meant the Clans were the right side.

The gray-and-white tom swiped his claws across her muzzle and Tawnystar flinched backwards. "We will kill you if you don't side with us," he warned her before marching away.

"Thornwhisker! You can take Oakstream, Rainpool, and…what's that ShadowClan cat's name…Mudstorm with your patrol to attack WindClan," Splashheart ordered.

Thornwhisker nodded. "Okay, RiverClan…Breezepelt will lead Ashstorm, Hawkwhisker, and Tawny…" the gray-and-white tom began to say Tawnystar's name, and Whitefur felt her stiffen beside him.

A plan formed in his mind. He stepped forward and whispered in Splashheart's ear, "Send her to ThunderClan with me."

Splashheart looked at him strangely. "I'm trusting you Whitefur. Prove to me that I was right to choose you," he growled.

"Okay, then, not Tawnystar," Splashheart meowed, and Whitefur saw her visibly relax beside him. "Silvercloud of ShadowClan then."

"Smokewhisker will be taking Ripplepool of RiverClan, Graywhisker of ThunderClan, and Darkclaw of ShadowClan to attack the ShadowClan camp," he announced.

"And lastly, I will be taking Sunblaze, Whitefur, and Tawnystar to the ThunderClan camp," Splashheart finished. "Let's go!"

They ran down a path Whitefur hadn't seen before. He struggled to stay at the front of the patrol, barely able to keep up with Splashheart. "How did she become Tawnystar?" he asked.

"Salmonstar was killed by a badger," Splashheart answered as they swam across a dark river. "The wound was too big for those StarClan fools to heal, so she lost all seven lives. Tawnystar got her nine lives a couple days ago."

The rest of the journey was in silence. The mist grew thicker until Whitefur couldn't see where they were going. The decaying smell slowly faded, replaced by the boring scents of new plants growing in ThunderClan territory. Light shone in the distance and then, they were in the forest.

Whitefur followed Splashheart down the familiar trail leading directly back to camp, and he'd never felt more alive. They stopped at the camp entrance, and the medicine cat glanced at Splashheart. The gray-and-white tom's amber eyes were shining.

Inside the camp, it was just after sunrise. Warriors were waking up, padding leisurely into camp. This peaceful scene was about to be disturbed, and Whitefur would be a part of it. *I can't let*

Splashheart down! I will take every one of Crazystar's lives and every one of Tawnystar's lives.

Splashheart raised his head. Crazystar was just starting to sniff the air suspiciously, heading for the camp entrance. "Warriors of SplashClan, attack!" he cried.

Whitefur raced into camp. He glanced back and saw Tawnystar taking on two Dark Forest warriors, that traitor! She arched her back and snarled menacingly. "Go and fight her. Give her some decent injuries, but don't kill her. Leave once she's wounded," Whitefur meowed to Splashheart.

"Like I said, I'm trusting you, Whitefur. Don't mess it up if you value your own life and safety," the gray-and-white tom growled before turning around and dragging Tawnystar off of Seedfur.

The battle has begun!

A/N: In the words of Whitefur, the battle has begun! :D

Chapter 22

Chapter 22

Flamestripe was just bringing fresh-kill to the nursery, where Petalfall was resting and Mousestorm's kits were playing. Suddenly, a voice shouted, "Warriors of SplashClan, attack!"

He stepped outside. Mousestorm told her kits to stay inside and then rushed out to join him. Petalfall walked out too but Flamestripe hissed, "Get back inside there! Now!"

It was just like his nightmares, except this time, it wasn't a dream. Dark, shadowy warriors rushed into the camp, launching themselves at his Clanmates, and two massive toms charged toward the nursery.

Flamestripe snarled ferociously and Mousestorm stiffened beside him. The queen's eyes blazed with fury and she leapt onto one's back.

Flamestripe followed her example and sank his claws into the tom's fur. The tom dropped to the ground, but he clung on. "No one can defeat Hollowtree!" he snarled.

"Watch me," Flamestripe growled.

Hollowtree rolled and Flamestripe barely jumped off in time. Before he could land a blow on the tom's soft belly, he was back on his feet. The black-furred tom charged and aimed for his neck.

Flamestripe barely recovered from shock in time to duck. *He's trying to kill me! So I'll have to kill him first…*

Hollowtree twisted away from Flamestripe when he swung his paw towards the tom's head. The flame-colored tom managed to grab one of Hollowtree's forepaws, but the tom pulled

free of his grasp. He lunged at Flamestripe, who sidestepped and leapt forward, crashing into his side and knocking him over.

Flamestripe leaned forward to kill him, but Hollowtree moved his head and heaved himself upward. But the young warrior clung on. “Nice try,” Flamestripe hissed.

Hollowtree sighed and relaxed. He closed his eyes as if preparing for the death blow, and Flamestripe hesitated. That’s when Hollowtree slithered out from under him and landed a blow to his muzzle.

Flamestripe quickly jumped backwards before he could land another strike. As Hollowtree charged yet again, Flamestripe stood his ground and at the last instant, leapt at him. Both cats went rolling across the camp in a screeching whirlwind, launching blow after blow at each other and narrowly avoiding collision with other groups of battling cats.

Flamestripe finally released his grip and both cats went tumbling onto the ground. The flame-colored tom rose exhaustedly to his feet. Hollowtree did the same. Flamestripe managed one last leap and Hollowtree’s attempt to sidestep failed. He planted a paw on the tom’s chest. “You may kill me,” Hollowtree panted. “But your beloved Clanmates will still die.”

He’s trying to distract me.

Flamestripe sank his teeth into the tom’s neck. Hollowtree fell limp in his jaws and slowly began to fade, leaving behind nothing but a dark pool of blood.

Then, a screech came from behind him. Mousestorm collapsed to the ground as her opponent landed the death blow and the tom began to march towards the nursery entrance.

Petalfall!

Tiredness forgotten, Flamestripe raced back in the direction of the nursery. He flung himself onto the tom’s back. His new enemy reared up onto his hindlegs and Flamestripe lost his

grip.

He hit the ground hard, but quickly scrambled back onto his feet. Before the tom could sink back down to all four paws, Flamestripe swept his hindlegs out from under him and pinned him to the ground. Refusing to think about it, the flame-colored tom quickly delivered the death blow.

He dashed into the nursery. Petalfall sat inside, looking frightened, and Mousestorm's kits seemed to be even more terrified. "Are you okay?" Flamestripe asked worriedly.

She nodded and Flamestripe settled down beside her. "Don't worry. Until the battle is over, I will stay here and protect you. I swear to StarClan, for as long as I am alive, I will not let any cat harm you without the fight of their life," he promised.

Chapter 23

Chapter 23

Goldentooth rushed towards him. “Whitefur, I’ll protect you…” he began.

Whitefur swiped his claws across his father’s nose and spun around, kicking him in the face with his hindlegs. “I don’t need protecting,” he growled and he sank his teeth into Goldentooth’s throat, savoring the warm, salty taste of blood.

He walked over to the edge of the clearing and watched Tawnystar fight Splashheart. Splashheart was beating her with ease and spun around to find another opponent after a swift blow to her face.

Now it’s my turn.

Whitefur walked over to the flame-colored RiverClan she-cat. “Tawnystar!” he called her name.

She spun around and narrowed her eyes. “What do you want?” she demanded.

Whitefur winced, pretending as if her words stung. “I’m sorry, Tawnystar, I can’t blame you for not trusting me. But I didn’t realize that they meant to kill all these cats, I thought Splashheart would unite the Clans and change the code,” he meowed. “I didn’t realize it was the code that kept battles like this from happening.”

“Why should I believe you?” she snarled.

“Because I already helped you. I tricked Splashheart into letting you come to ThunderClan instead of RiverClan,” Whitefur replied. “Now that wound on your ear looks nasty, let’s try to get over to my den and get it treated.”

Her eyes softened slightly. “Fine, but then I want to help

you all fight," the RiverClan leader sighed.

Whitefur led her into the medicine cat den and grab some marigold leaves. He chewed them and placed the paste on her ear. He then gently covered it with cobwebs. "There," he meowed. "Does that feel better?"

Tawnystar nodded. He hooked two scarlet berries on his claws, and took out a few catmint leaves. *A good way to waste Honeywhisker's precious cure for greencough.*

He pushed them over to Tawnystar. As she eyed them curiously, Whitefur lied, "These are juniper berries and tansy. They're good for breathing and strength."

Tawnystar ate the herbs and looked up. "Thanks, Whitefur," she meowed.

"No problem," he responded.

They rushed out of the den. "Whitefur," Tawnystar whispered. "My paws are starting to feel numb."

"I don't know what's wrong but we don't have any time!" he hissed. "The future of the Clans is at stake! I'll see you after the battle, Tawnystar! May StarClan light your path!"

He dashed off. *Where is Crazystar?*

The medicine cat glanced back. At that instant, Tawnystar staggered forward and collapsed, a spasm passing through her body. *I don't think she actually realized until now that I fed her deathberries!*

Splashheart came up next to him. "Good job," the gray-and-white tom whispered in his ear. "Whatever you did and whatever your plan was, it obviously worked. I'm glad I chose you to train with us."

The soon-to-be leader of SplashClan left in search of his next opponent. That's when Whitefur glimpsed light gray fur at the edge of his vision, close to the Highledge.

Tawnystar's first life is taken care of, and SplashClan will steal her other eight lives, probably. And now? Crazystar is about to be taken down as well…

A/N: Hope you are enjoying the battle so far! I *PROBABLY,* I repeat, *PROBABLY,* won't update again tonight, but I'll post more tomorrow :)

Chapter 24

Chapter 24

Whitefur padded through the crowd to where Crazystar was fighting Redwillow, a transparent warrior formerly of ShadowClan. He dragged him off of the ThunderClan leader. “Hey, what are you doing?” Redwillow growled.

“Let me take care of her. I can get rid of her without a fight,” he whispered quietly, before pretending to bite Redwillow’s tail.

Redwillow understood. He screeched with fake pain and swung his paw towards Whitefur’s head, but the medicine cat could see his claws were sheathed. He ducked and gave Redwillow a push. The old warrior allowed him to knock him over and then, scrambled up, fleeing. “Thanks,” Crazystar panted. “But I could’ve managed.”

Yeah, right.

“No problem,” he meowed instead.

“I need to find another opponent. See you…” she began.

“Hold on. That wound on your muzzle already smells infected,” Whitefur lied. “You need to get it treated.”

Crazystar sighed with frustration. “Fine,” she growled.

Whitefur began to guide her towards the den, but then stopped and suddenly turned around. “What is it?” the ThunderClan leader asked.

The medicine cat didn’t answer. He sliced his claws across her throat and saw surprise flash in her green eyes as she collapsed.

Whitefur prepared to enlarge the gash in her throat but suddenly felt someone grab his scruff and drag him off of her. He was tossed onto the grassy ground and a heavy dark gray paw was placed on his chest. It was Stonestream, the ThunderClan deputy.

"Kill me," Whitefur snarled, gazing at Crazystar's unmoving body behind him. "But Splashheart will still take care of your mate, won't you, Splashheart?"

Stonestream fell for it. He instantly released his grip on Whitefur, who climbed back onto his paws, and spun around. The medicine cat sprang forward and swept the ThunderClan deputy's forepaws out from under him.

"You traitor, that was an evil trick!" Stonestream hissed, struggling to escape from Whitefur's grasp.

"No, honestly, anyone that's somewhat intelligent would've thought of it," Whitefur responded.

Stonestream stopped writhing underneath his paws, but Whitefur didn't relax. "Well, get it over with," the dark gray tom meowed, closing his eyes.

"Fine," Whitefur grumbled, raising his left forepaw for the death blow.

A red blur crashed into him. Redwhisker's eyes were dark with fury. "I can't believe you of all cats sided with the Place of No Stars," she hissed coldly.

Without the hesitation the Whitefur would've expected from his sister, she sank her teeth into his neck. Agony washed over him and he felt his legs buckle beneath him. He felt his lungs growing more and more desperate for air as he took rapid breaths. He summoned all his strength and managed to cough out a few words, "I...will return."

Finally, darkness engulfed him and when he opened his eyes again, he was in the Dark Forest.

It was the same clearing where Splashheart had

announced the attack patrols. He followed the scent trail left behind and was soon in ThunderClan territory once again.

I may be dead, but I will still kill Redwhisker…and I'll worry about everyone else after that.

Above the stone hollow, Whitefur walked to the edge of the cliff and peered over the side, not caring about the thorns pricking his pelt.

From this view, he could tell that SplashClan outnumbered ThunderClan. He could see the unmoving bodies of his Dark Forest Clanmates, Hollowtree and Strongstorm, and the lifeless bodies of Blazestorm, Swiftstorm, and Mousestorm.

He heard a sudden rustling from the bushes behind him and he quickly spun around to see two angry she-cats emerging.

A/N: Next chapter is Redwhisker POV :)

Hope you enjoyed this! I can hardly believe this story is almost over… :D

Chapter 25

Chapter 25

Redwhisker stared in horror at the unmoving body of the traitorous medicine cat. *I can't believe it! And I killed him, he's my own brother…*

"Thanks," Stonestream's voice pulled her out of her thoughts.

She stepped away and sheathed her claws. "No problem," she whispered.

"What does 'I will return' mean?" the deputy asked confusedly.

"He'll go to the Place of No Stars, where he belongs," Redwhisker replied. "But he'll come back and fight again with his 'Clanmates' because these cats are all from the Dark Forest too, you know."

"I didn't realize these cats were from the Dark Forest," Stonestream meowed.

Agonized screeching pierced through the sound of fighting. "Guard Crazystar," the red-furred she-cat hissed. "I need to find out who that is."

Tawnystar lay in the center of the hollow, thrashing around. Her paws tore up clumps of grass and she shrieked uncontrollably. The flame-colored she-cat struggles were growing weaker while her breathing became so rapid that she was breathing probably twice as fast as Redwhisker.

Redwhisker dragged her into the closest den, which was the apprentices den. She watched as the RiverClan leader's flanks stilled. Redwhisker waited, knowing that she'd have to leave soon

because Whitefur, if he wasn't here already, would definitely arrive soon.

Suddenly, Tawnystar gasped and opened her eyes. "Redwhisker? What happened…" she began.

"I killed Whitefur but he'll back soon. Did he have anything to do with what happened to you?" she asked.

Tawnystar nodded and sat up. "He fed me deathberries," she answered.

"He'll be back from the Dark Forest soon. I need some assistance to kill him, he's a good fighter," Redwhisker started.

"Tell me about it," Tawnystar grunted.

"Will you come with me?" the ThunderClan warrior asked.

"You know that if you kill him, he'll be gone forever," the RiverClan she-cat reminded her sympathetically.

Redwhisker took a deep breath. *I don't want to think about it.* "I have no choice," she meowed shakily. "He's a threat to my Clan."

"Then let's go. Where will he be?" Tawnystar wondered.

"If I know my brother at all, he'll go to the highest point on the taller stone wall. He used to love to look down on the camp, and I'm guessing he'll want to see the battle from up there," Redwhisker replied.

Tawnystar rose to her paws and began limping towards the den's entrance. "C'mon!" the RiverClan leader called encouragingly.

Redwhisker joined her and let Tawnystar fall behind her slightly. She led the way through a familiar forest trail, feeling the ground start to slope upwards. She pointed with her tail to a clump of bushes. "Hide in there," the red-furred she-cat whispered.

They crawled in and sat there, waiting and not daring to make a sound. Shortly after, a white tom appeared and peered over the edge. “Now!” Redwhisker hissed.

They climbed out of the bushes and Whitefur spun around. Before he could react, Tawnystar gave him a powerful shove and he staggered backwards. That’s when he realized behind him there was nothing but air.

Whitefur somehow managed to get a grip on a small ledge a little ways down. “If I’m going to die, I’m taking you with me,” he growled.

How in the StarClan’s name did Whitefur, a medicine cat who’s supposed to be closest to StarClan, become so evil?

Tawnystar leapt backwards. “Not you, her!” the medicine cat snarled, reaching up and grabbing Redwhisker’s left forepaw before she could follow Tawnystar’s example.

Whitefur released his grip and his weight pulled Redwhisker over the edge. Tawnystar lunged forward and grabbed her by the scruff. The RiverClan leader sank her claws into the grass to avoid getting dragged over as well and desperately tried to pull Redwhisker up. “That’s right, Tawnykit,” Whitefur sneered. “Come join us. Even if our combined weight doesn’t make you fall all the way to your death along with us, when you pull her up, you’re taking me to safety as well.”

Redwhisker remembered the flash of relief in Stonestream’s eyes as she knocked Whitefur off of him. But no one could save her without saving her brother.

Do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend this Clan, EVEN AT THE COST OF YOUR LIFE?

“I do,” Redwhisker whispered quietly.

She met Tawnystar’s gaze. “Let go,” she meowed.

“You’re a true warrior, Redwhisker,” the RiverClan she-cat responded before opening her jaws.

Redwhisker felt the sensation in her stomach that only comes from freefalling, hurtling towards the ground at unthinkable speeds. She closed her eyes and braced herself for the impact that was inevitable…

A/N: Whitefur is dead forever and Redwhisker has been sent to StarClan. What do you think of the battle so far? :)

Chapter 26

Chapter 26

The warriors of StarClan appeared around her. Liontail was among them this time, and he spoke. “You may have lost your eighth life to that traitor, but you’ve led your Clan well. Use your last life to fight your worst enemy, one who is more dangerous than him or any other cat in StarClan, the Place of No Stars, or around the lake,” her former deputy meowed.

“We’re outnumbered,” Crazystar noted. “Killing Splashheart won’t end it.”

“StarClan will come to your assistance, just as we did the last time,” Liontail responded. “We must send you back now. Whitefur will be killed, but he will take one of your most loyal warriors with him.”

“What? Who is it?” she demanded.

But the starry cats were already fading…

Crazystar opened her eyes to see Stonestream looking down at her worriedly. She lifted her head, waiting for her strength to return as it always did. “What happened to Whitefur?” she asked.

Stonestream glanced to his right and Crazystar followed his gaze. An unmoving tom with white fur stained red on the bottom of his neck laid on the grass. “Did you kill him?” she whispered.

Her deputy shook his head. “No, Redwhisker did,” he replied.

Crazystar blinked in surprise. *Redwhisker is his sister!*

“Where’s Redwhisker?” the ThunderClan asked.

Stonestream scanned the stone hollow and finally pointed with his tail to the tall stone cliff to their left. A flame-colored cat, too small to be Flamestripe or Flamefoot, was holding on to a red-furred she-cat who'd fallen over the edge. A white-furred tom clung to her forepaw and his weight kept Tawnystar from pulling her up. "WHAT?" Crazystar screeched.

She climbed to her paws and pushed her way through the battle, shoving a light brown tom who tried to stop her down to the ground. All of a sudden, Tawnystar either intentionally released her grip or accidentally dropped them because Whitefur and Redwhisker both began to plummet towards the ground. Before Crazystar could reach them, they hit the ground.

Her vision went red with rage. *So many of my warriors, either traitors or dead.* She turned and sliced her claws across a Dark Forest warrior's throat. At that moment, the ThunderClan leader was unstoppable. She killed one with a swift strike before spinning around to dispatch the one sneaking up behind her. She was about to pounce onto another's back and sink her teeth into his neck, but she stopped at Stonestream's voice. "Crazystar!" the dark gray tom called. "Don't worry about them! Take care of Splashheart!"

The Dark Forest had more warriors than ThunderClan, even with three of their warriors just killed and certainly others from earlier in the battle.

All of a sudden, a shaft of light came from the sky. The warriors of StarClan descended, Liontail leading them. "Stonestream is right," the deputy growled. "Your fight is meant to be with Splashheart."

Crazystar turned and searched for the evil tom. She saw gray-and-white fur near the elders den and guessed that Splashheart was over there.

It was him, because those sinister amber eyes couldn't belong to anyone else. Splashheart was glaring at Hawkwhisker, who refused to flinch away from his menacing gaze. "I thought I ordered you to go with Breezepelt to RiverClan!" the gray-and-white tom snarled.

“I came to defend my Clan,” Hawkwhisker stated boldly. “You should’ve known from the beginning. I’m a loyal warrior of ThunderClan, and even if I wasn’t, I’d never side with you! If you thought training me was a good idea…”

Splashheart grabbed him by the neck and tossed him to ground. But Hawkwhisker’s eyes still showed no fear. “Kill me. Prove to everyone that you are the evil tyrant I always knew you were,” the dark brown tom hissed.

Crazystar rushed forward, but before she could knock Splashheart off of Hawkwhisker, he’d delivered the death blow. Her green eyes narrowed and she leapt, crashing into the evil tom. Splashheart easily threw her off and casually rose to his paws. “Hi, Crazykit. Still as much of a weakling as ever, I see,” he meowed. “Tricks won’t work this time. Sure you don’t want to run back to the nursery while you still have a chance?”

The ThunderClan leader unsheathed her claws. “You’ll have to kill me more than once,” she lied.

“Easy enough,” Splashheart responded.

“I will defeat you,” Crazystar stated with false confidence. “Are YOU sure that you don’t want to tell your ‘warriors’ to retreat?”

“You pretend to be unafraid, Crazystar, but I know better than that. You fear me. Memories of me haunt you in your sleep and this moment here where you die and I take over the Clans is what you’ve been dreading since my death. But guess what? I don’t fear you!” he growled ferociously, charging towards her.

Crazystar tensed her muscles and prepared for the vicious fight that would follow.

I have to win. If I don’t, the Clans will be lost forever…

Chapter 27

Chapter 27

Crazystar tried for a simple sidestep, thinking Splashheart would expect something more complicated. The gray-and-white tom turned quickly and the ThunderClan leader didn't jump backwards in time to avoid a blow aimed at her shoulder.

She ignored the stinging pain and lunged forward, trying to sink her teeth into Splashheart's neck. Of course, it couldn't be that simple. Splashheart twisted out of the way and landed another blow, barely missing her right eye.

Crazystar desperately hopped backwards as he swung a massive forepaw towards her neck. Splashheart tried to sweep her forepaws out from under her with one swift move but she rolled out of the way.

The gray-and-white tom launched himself into the air, and Crazystar leapt off to the right to avoid him landing on her back. He hit the ground and spun around, blocking her attempt to deliver the death blow with his left forepaw. Before she could pull back, he'd sank his teeth into her forepaw, dragging her towards him just as Whitefur had done to Redwhisker. The ThunderClan summoned all of her strength and managed to yank her paw backwards. She momentarily glanced down and saw a large patch of fur missing. It was covered in blood and she looked away, trying not to put much weight on it.

Splashheart dashed towards her, still looking full of energy as if the battle had no effect on him. Crazystar struggled even to land a tiny blow to the back of his ear as she sidestepped. She panted with the effort of fighting such a powerful opponent.

He continued to attack her repeatedly, and Crazystar gasped for breath, wondering how she was even finding the strength to dodge each strike.

Splashheart leapt towards her, spinning in mid-air and kicking her in the face with his hindlegs before she could spring backwards.

She was knocked to the ground but had no choice but to scramble back onto her aching paws. The ThunderClan leader saw him racing in her direction yet again and jumped towards him. He skidded to a halt and she landed short. He gave her a powerful push and she collapsed onto the ground.

Crazystar could hardly breathe at all as he planted a heavy paw on her chest. He raked his claws across her belly a few times, and she could barely stop herself from screeching in agony. “Not so much of a fighter now, are you?” Splashheart growled, leaning closer.

She heaved herself upward and his amber eyes widened with shock. Perhaps it was the element of surprise that allowed her to throw him off, considering the fact that he’d never even expect her to try it. But he was back on his paws almost instantaneously. “You caught me off guard,” the gray-and-white tom admitted. “But that most certainly doesn’t mean it’s possible for you to win this battle.”

Crazystar didn’t waste her breath responding to his comment. She waited for his next attack, taking a few deep breaths as he tensed his muscles and leapt towards her. The ThunderClan leader slid forwards and turned. Splashheart also twisted around in mid-air to face her. He raised a forepaw and raked his claws across her nose. She tried to jump back, but not in time.

Around the clearing, the StarClan cats and her warriors were steadily driving the forces of the Place of No Stars back towards the camp entrance. But none of that would matter unless she killed her worst enemy who stood in front of her, because as long as Splashheart was alive, his evil plotting against the Clans would live on as well.

He darted towards Crazystar and as she leapt backwards, she tripped over something. She glanced down and her heartbeat seemed to stop momentarily. A cat laid on the ground with a large

gash in his throat. It was her son, Blazestorm.

The ThunderClan leader was filled with rage. “This all your fault, you fool!” Crazystar snarled.

She found new strength in her terrible anger. She charged towards Splashheart. His claws tore off a large clump of fur from her cheek, but she was hardly aware of the pain. It was nothing compared to the agony in her heart.

He gave her mighty shove and although she stumbled, it wasn’t enough to stop her. She crashed into Splashheart and as they tumbled onto the ground, she placed a paw on his neck to hold him down. “No one messes with my kits and gets away alive,” she hissed.

Crazystar raised a forepaw and sliced her claws across his throat without hesitation. She watched as the light disappeared from his amber eyes and he slowly began to fade into the green grass.

The Dark Forest retreated soon after, but Crazystar cared about nothing other than her dead kit.

A/N: The battle is over! :) The next chapter is the epilogue!

Please tell me your thoughts, and as always, I hope you enjoyed! :D

Epilogue

Epilogue

"Crazystar, you must come to the medicine cat den," Honeywhisker meowed.

The ThunderClan leader had her head buried in her dead son's fur. "Why?" Crazystar asked.

"Because if we don't stop the bleeding soon, you'll die because of too much blood loss," the medicine cat replied.

"I am going to stay with my son," the gray-furred she-cat insisted stubbornly.

"Crazystar, even if you don't die from blood loss, one of the wounds will more than likely get infected without being properly treated," Honeywhisker told her leader.

"If I am dead, I will be in StarClan with Blazestorm at least," Crazystar responded quietly.

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When dawn came, the ThunderClan leader was dead.

Stonestream was the first to notice. Most cats were occupied by the fact that Petalfall's kitting was occurring in the nursery at that time. The rest probably assumed she had just fallen asleep. But the dark gray deputy had been sitting vigil with her as well.

"Crazystar, wake up," he whispered softly. "It's morning. The elders and StarClan will take care of him now."

When she didn't respond, he poked her in the side with a paw. "Please don't ignore me, Crazystar," Stonestream begged, his voice tight with pain. "He was my son as well."

The gray-furred she-cat still didn't say anything. And that's when Stonestream realized she wasn't breathing.

He dashed into the nursery in time to see Honeywhisker pass the first kit, a tiny cream-colored she-cat that would probably look just like her mother, to Flamestripe. "Lick it," the medicine cat ordered. "Get it dry and…"

"Honeywhisker, Crazystar is dead!" Stonestream shouted.

A ripple of shock passed through the nursery and the crowd of warriors gathered outside. But Honeywhisker sighed and nodded. "I tried to warn her," she meowed sadly.

"Wait, you mean you didn't treat her injuries?" Stonestream growled.

"She wouldn't let me," Honeywhisker answered.

"You let your Clanmate and leader DIE?" the dark gray tom screeched.

The medicine cat met his gaze. "I respected her wishes," she replied. "And the warrior code says to obey your leader no matter what they tell you. Now announce your deputy and we can leave for the Moonpool. Petalfall's kitting is nearly over."

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Blazestorm stepped back. Stonestream noticed for the first time that here in StarClan, his hindleg was no longer twisted. His son's limp that had kept him struggling with training was finally gone.

The orange-and-black tom was replaced by the cat he wanted to see most of all. The gray-furred she-cat looked younger and stronger. "Stonestream, I have always loved you with all of my heart. But it was my time, and I could hear StarClan calling me. I trust that you will lead my Clan well, and after that, we will be together until we fade to nothing," Crazystar promised. "With this life, I give you love. True love is stronger than any other force."

Stonestream clenched his teeth as the agonizing wave of anger passed through him. “Yes, I believe you already know love could overcome any circumstance and for any cat you truly love, you would be more than willing to die defending them,” Crazystar meowed.

“How will I see you?” he asked.

“I will meet you in your dreams,” she replied. “Stonestar, I couldn’t be more proud of you.”

The StarClan cats called his new name. “But that’s not enough!” the new leader protested. “I don’t want to live without you.”

The starry warriors were already starting to fade. “You will never be without me,” she purred, her voice growing distant. “May StarClan light your path, Stonestar. I will watch over you, always.”

A/N: This book is officially completed! The next book will be a Super Edition called Salmonstar's Fate, and I'll have the Author's Note and possibly the allegiances and book cover posted soon!

Hope you enjoyed the story of Crazystar's life and I'm looking forward to writing a bunch of Super Editions now that these two books are finished! :D